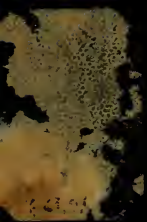


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1 BLANNERHASSETT

OR 45

The Irony of Fate

A DRAMATIC ROMANCE

IN

A PROLOGUE AND FOUR ACTS

FOUNDED UPON INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF HARMAN BLANNERHASSETT,
HIS WIFE MARGARET, AARON BURR, HIS DAUGHTER
THEODOSIA, AND ALEXANDER HAMILTON

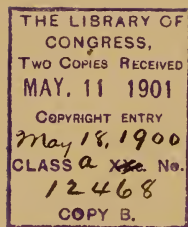
BY

CHARLES FELTON PIDGIN

BOSTON

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1901



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CHARACTERS IN THE PROLOGUE.

AARON BURR, Vice-President of the United States, late a Colonel in the Revolutionary Army.
ALEXANDER HAMILTON, a prominent New York lawyer, late a General in the army, and Secretary of the Treasury.
WILLIAM VAN NESS, Burr's second.
NATHANIEL PENDLETON, Hamilton's second.
DR. DAVID HOSACK, a surgeon.
FREDERIC CLARKE, a New Jersey farmer's son.
DUKE, a colored bargeman.
KATE EMBLETON, a milkmaid; an orphan.

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY.

COL. AARON BURR, late Vice-President of the United States.
HARMAN BLENNERHASSETT, a wealthy and highly educated gentleman.
JOSEPH ALSTON, Burr's son-in-law.
GRAHAM, confidential agent of the U. S. government.
DR. DAVID HOSACK, a physician.
CAPT. CLARKE, of the Ohio Militia.
RANSOME, Mr. Blennerhassett's colored servant.
MARGARET BLENNERHASSETT, wife of Harman.
THEODOSIA BURR ALSTON, Burr's daughter.
KATE EMBLETON, a *protégé* of Col. Burr's.

SCENES.

PROLOGUE.—A field at Weehawken, New Jersey, 1804.

ACT I.—Hall in Blennerhassett's Mansion on Blennerhassett's Island in the Ohio River. 1805.

ACT II.—Drawing Room in Blennerhassett's Mansion. The next day.

ACT III.—Same as Act II. 1806.

ACT IV.—Aaron Burr's Law Office in New York City. 1812.

NOTES.—The play is founded on incidents in the lives of *Harman Blennerhassett*, his wife *Margaret*, *Aaron Burr* and his daughter *Theodosia*. It is thoroughly American in scene and incident. It is necessarily historical to a certain degree, but that feature is subordinated to a strong love story. The truth of the poet's words, "The paths of glory lead but to the grave," is nowhere more plainly shown than in the life of *Aaron Burr*. The death of *Hamilton*, *Burr's* dreams of conquest, the ruin of *Blennerhassett*, the trial of *Burr* for treason, the sad death of *Theodosia*, are the most strikingly interesting episodes in American history, and the most susceptible of effective dramatic treatment. More than half the language put in *Burr's* mouth is taken from his own letters, speeches, and note books.

PROLOGUE.

(A field at Weehawken, N. J., July 11, 1804. Time, 6.30 a. m.

For scene, see Parton's "Life of Burr." Wing scene—

View of river on flat—wood scene. Enter

Frederic up stage R. comes down,

looks R. and L., comes C.)

Frederic. Where can she be? Can I have missed her? I have grown to love that girl in spite of myself, and I pass the day in thinking of the joy of seeing her, alone, in the morning. Perhaps I am too early. I will look up the road. *(Goes up stage, exit L. U. E. Enter Kate, L. 1 E. with pail of milk, goes R., sits on bank near tree R.)*

Kate. I have seen no signs of him this morning. Only a passing fancy of his, I suppose. Rich farmers' sons don't usually make love to their father's servants, but this may be an exception. Frederic *(looks around)*, I mean *Mr. Clarke*, seems to enjoy my company, and I don't suppose it would be ladylike to tell him that I don't enjoy his; it would be untrue, anyway, for the weight of my day of toil is lightened by our cheerful morning conversations. *(Rising.)* He is n't coming, so I will keep on to Farmer Wilkins'. *(Starts to go out R. 1 E. Enter Fred. L. U. E.)*

Fred. Kate! *(Kate turns as Fred comes down C.)* Good morning, Kate, and it is a lovely morning, is n't it? I was afraid I had missed you, Kate.

Kate. Missed me? It would have been more polite if you had.

Fred. *(Laughing.)* Oh! you prefer to be called Miss Kate. I will try and be more polite, I will call you Miss Embleton if you will let me take your milk pail and walk with you as far as the stile.

Kate. I don't know as I shall allow any such thing. What would your father say if he saw you with the milk pail on one arm? *(Fred takes up pail.)*

Fred. And you on the other. *(Offers arm which Kate takes laughingly.)* Well, my father is apt to take his choice expression from Scripture.

Kate. What could he find to say to suit this occasion?

Fred. Well, he could say scripturally and truthfully that his son was in a land with milk on one side (*holding up pail*) and honey on the other.

Kate. (*Taking her hand from his arm.*) Give me my pail, Mr. Clarke—keep such sweet compliments for your wife.

Fred. (*Putting down pail.*) Kate, I want to talk to you, and no nonsense either. Real, true, hard facts, and I want your opinion. Come, Miss Kate, let us sit down. (*They sit on bank.*)

Kate. I don't know as a young girl like myself, your father's servant, should be the confidante of a rich man's son.

Fred. You are the only woman who can answer my question, Kate. I had a long talk with my father last night.

Kate. I hope you both enjoyed it. I rarely derive any pleasure from his conversation.

Fred. It *was* pleasant, for a wonder. I told him I had decided upon my future course—either to marry (*Kate starts*) or go out and begin life for myself.

Kate. He thinks you had better go west, don't he?

Fred. I think he might on general principles, but when I told him whom I wished to marry (*Kate starts again*) he said he would give me the Cushman farm and a thousand dollars. What do you think of that?

Kate. Remarkably generous, for him. But what will she—the woman—you—what will she say?

Fred. I'm going to ask her—

Kate. A very sensible idea. Take my advice and do it at once. Your father may change his mind. Well, I'm glad, Mr. Clarke, you have found a woman—whom you love, and (*taking up her pail*) I hope she will love you and make you a good wife. I must go now, Mr. Clarke.

Fred. Then you consent?

Kate. I? What have I to do with it? You said you wouldn't talk nonsense.

Fred. And I won't, Kate. Father says *you* are a nice, honest, hard-working girl, just the one for his money—and he would give us his blessing—and, Kate, what do you say? (*Kate takes his*

arm, and drops her head on his shoulder. Fred embraces her.)
Come, Kate, I will take the milk pail, for Farmer Wilkins may be waiting for his breakfast. But remember, before we reach the stile, you must say "yes."

Kate. We will walk very slowly — Frederic — for it is a very important question to me.

Fred. And your answer will be very important to *me*.

(They exeunt, arm in arm, R. 1 E.)

(Enter L. U. E., Col. Burr and Mr. Van Ness. They come down.)

Van Ness. We are here first, Colonel.

Burr. I have always tried to be the first upon the field of honor, and the last to leave it.

Van Ness. It falls to us to select the ground, Colonel. Shall we choose this, or look for a better place?

Burr. If I were sure I am to fall, I would choose this place to say my farewell to earth. My opponent may be more particular. We will look further. If we fare no better we shall yet be sure of this.

Van Ness. One word, Colonel, and pardon it from a man whom you know to be a good friend.

Burr. (Clasps Van Ness' hand.) Van Ness, you have stuck closer to me than a brother; *you* may wring my heart and trample on my feelings and yet I shall be your debtor. Speak out, Van Ness, what troubles you?

Van Ness. You know it is the usual custom for the seconds to try and arrange matters without a recourse to arms.

Burr. In this instance, it will be a mere form.

Van Ness. Why so? Suppose Gen. Hamilton shows any disposition —

Burr. He will not. His attitude is the result of false pride and not of sober reflection. Even if his reason, as it must, condemned his treatment of me, his pride would force him to face me, and to refuse any reparation. That is not true bravery. A man should never be willing to die, or cause the death of another, from false pride.

Van Ness. Your words lead to what I was going to say — and that is, *if* Gen. Hamilton should show a disposition to —

Col. Burr. Pardon me, my dear Van Ness — but you will have no occasion to arrange a compromise ; but *if* you should, you may proceed on this ground. You can say Col. Burr disavows virtually all motives of predetermined hostility, and will accept any reparation that will successfully refute the slanders from which he has suffered. I can do no more — nor less. Come, Van Ness, let us not forget our duties as the Committee of Arrangements.

(*Exeunt Burr and Van Ness, R. U. E.*)

(*Enter Fred and Kate R. 1 E., without the pail.*)

Fred. As we turned the bend in the road I saw a boat at the little landing.

Kate. Who can it be? There is no game here to shoot.

Fred. The men who shoot here bring their *own* game — they make game of each other.

Kate. Are you making game of me?

Fred. No, far from it, Kate ; within a hundred feet from where we stand, three years ago the son of Gen. Hamilton was killed in a duel. A youth of twenty, brave but inexperienced, he fell the victim of the crafty skill of an adept duellist. Within the past fortnight a misunderstanding has existed between his father, Gen. Hamilton, and Col. Aaron Burr. It is not improbable that *they* have come here to fight.

Kate. It is horrible to think that the father may die upon the same field where his son fell a victim.

Fred. That will never be. A righteous Heaven will never allow such a patriot as Alexander Hamilton to fall by the hand of Aaron Burr, a man who ruins a friend with as little feeling as he would an enemy.

Kate. I always thought he had most devoted friends.

Fred. Among the women of society, yes, but the men all hate him.

Kate. That is n't the reason why the men hate him so, is it?

Fred. What reason (*a little angrily*).

Kate. Why, because the women are such good friends of his.

Fred. Don't be silly, Kate. I revere Gen. Hamilton. I hate Aaron Burr, and I could never be friendly with any one who took his part.

Kate. You are unreasonable. Supposing I said I thought Col. Burr was a handsome man and a brave officer?

Fred. I should allow his good looks, but deny his bravery. Why, he was the silent enemy and detractor of Washington, who would not advance him because he could not trust him; and Gen. Hamilton says to-day he is not a man to be trusted.

Kate. Somebody must trust him or he could not be Vice-President of the United States; and he must be a brave man for I have read that when Gen. Richard Montgomery was shot on the plains of Abraham before Quebec, "little Burr," as they called him, took the body and carried it from the battle-field amid a shower of bullets. It took a brave man to do that (*satirically*).

Fred. He should engage you to plead his cause. Your eloquence is almost overpowering, but it doesn't change my mind. I think Aaron Burr is a villain, and no honest woman should think otherwise.

Kate. But women like villains, sometimes, when they are handsome and brave.

Fred. Before I marry you, I shall expect you to agree with me on this point, or we shall certainly quarrel.

Kate. And before I marry you I shall insist upon your respecting my feelings, and I, for one, think Col. Burr is as good in his way as Gen. Hamilton is in his way.

Fred. Kate, I am surprised. I won't be cross with you, but I should hesitate before marrying a woman who saw anything in Aaron Burr's life or character to admire.

Kate. Then you had better hesitate, for I will never marry you until you change your mind about Col. Burr.

Fred. That will never be. I love you, Kate, but you must leave politics to me, and be satisfied to take my judgment of our public men. I *know* about them; you are only governed by a false sentiment. Come, Kate, let us stop arguing and go home.

Kate. I prefer to stay here.

Fred. Kate, I ask you, if you love me, to come with me to father's, and I will tell him you have consented; the farm and the money will be ours. Come, Kate.

Kate. I want to sit down and think it over. I can't agree to give up my honest convictions without a little fight with myself.

Fred. I ask you once more and for the last time to come with me. If you do not I shall tell father I am going to Ohio — that you have refused me.

Kate. Then he will drive me out of doors for daring to refuse you, the rich farmer's son.

Fred. What shall I say to father?

Kate. (*Coldly.*) Tell him you are going to Ohio.

Fred. I will take you at your word. Farewell, Kate, farewell. I leave you to the kind attentions of *your friend*, Col. Burr.

(*Fred exits L. U. E. Kate falls on bank, R. and bursts into tears.*

Enter Col. Burr and Van Ness, R. U. E.)

Burr. Well, Van Ness, I think after all, this is the best location. We shall both be free from the intrusion of the sunlight. (*Going R.*) What, a Niobe in tears — no, a nymph. (*Kate looks up.*) My dear young lady, can I be of service to you?

Kate. (*Sobbing.*) No sir.

Burr. Allow me to tender my sympathy and my aid; if you refuse both I shall feel aggrieved.

Kate. It is nothing to interest a stranger. It was a foolish affair anyway — but it was all *his* fault.

Burr. Ah, I divine — a lover's quarrel. Is the other lady as pretty as yourself?

Kate. It wasn't about a lady, it was about a man.

Burr. Two strings to your bow. Why should *you* cry? Have you lost them both?

Kate. The man we quarreled about neither of us had ever seen. *He* called him a villain and said he would marry no woman who spoke well of him.

Van Ness. (*Coming down.*) Who was the villain you had such a good opinion of? He must be a favored rascal when a lady prefers to worship him in secret to having a lover in her own right.

Burr. Yes, who is this precious fellow who thus invisibly charms the fairest of her sex? (*Takes Kate's hand and kisses it.*)

Kate. (*Distract.*) 'T was Col. Aaron Burr.

Van Ness. What? Burr? Well, why, Miss ——

Burr. (*Aside to Van Ness.*) Let me manage this. 'Tis too sacred to be made a joke of. (*To Kate.*) And you have never seen this Col. Burr, this villain, as your lover called him?

Kate. No, sir. Have you? *Is* he so bad?

Burr. Why did you defend him, if you were so ignorant of his character?

Kate. Because it seems to be the fashion to abuse him and praise Gen. Hamilton, and my heart always goes out to one who is under a ban.

Burr. Who are you, Miss ——?

Kate. My name is Kate Embleton. I am an orphan, and a servant for Capt. Horatio Clarke, Frederic's father, but I shall have to leave now, for his father will never forgive my rejection of his son.

Burr. You have not rejected him; the quarrel is not so bad as that, *I* hope.

Kate. I said I would never marry him until he changed his mind about Col. Burr, but he said he should never change his mind. So it's all settled, I suppose.

Burr. My dear young lady, let me advise you. I know this Col. Burr; in fact, I am an intimate acquaintance. He is not such a bad man as they say he is — in my opinion — but he would be the last person to wish any lady to defend him, if by so doing she lost the love of an honest man. He would say, as I do, make up your quarrel; whether Col. Burr is a villain or a saint should not trouble a happy home in Jersey. (*Takes out purse.*) I shall tell Col. Burr the name of his fair defender, and in case *you* should ever need a friend, go to his residence at Richmond Hill, in New York City, and send in your name. He will remember you and will (*aside*), if he is living, befriend you. And allow me to testify his gratitude in a more substantial fashion — with this purse, in which you will find enough to give you a fine wedding.

Kate. But, sir, I ought not to take this from you, an entire stranger.

Burr. No, not an entire stranger. You have defended my friend, Col. Burr, and that act makes you my friend.

Kate. (*Taking purse.*) And your name, sir?

Burr. (*Kissing Kate's hand.*) Think of me only as your friend—
for we shall probably *never meet again.* (*Turns away.*)

Van Ness. (*To Kate, R.*) My dear young lady, go, at once.
Pardon my words, but a matter of urgent business—

Kate. (*To Van Ness.*) I can imagine—there is to be a duel—

Van Ness. Your woman's wit has guessed the truth.

Kate. And will he?

Van Ness. Yes, and as he told you, he may never see you again.

Kate. And he is Col. Burr's friend?

Van Ness. The closest and the dearest one of them all.

Kate. (*Rushing to Burr.*) Sir (*Burr turns*), I am a woman, and
think duelling is but murder, but, if *you* are in the right, and I
feel you must be, I hope we *shall* meet again.

(*Exits hurriedly, L. 1 E.*)

Burr. (*Coming down C., near Van Ness.*) You see, Van Ness,
a woman who has never known me defends me, and refuses to
marry the man who spoke ill of me. Many a man has died
without so pleasant a thought to take with him. But where can
they be?

Van Ness. Let us take a little stroll along the river bank; we can
see them before they land.

Burr. Agreed.

(*Takes Van Ness' arm. They walk up stage and exit R. U. E.*
An instant, then Gen. Hamilton and Pendleton, his second, enter
L. U. E. and come down L.)

Hamilton. Is he here?

Pendleton. I saw him and his second but a few rods away on the
river bank as we reached the top of the hill. It lacks but five
minutes of the hour; they will soon return. General, have you
anything further to say to me?

Hamilton. No, my dear Pendleton, only to thank you for your
zealous service, your unvarying kindness, your true friendship.
(*They clasp hands.*) I have left in my desk a paper which, if I
fall, I wish you to give to the public. Last night, in my study,
alone with my Maker, I wrote the explanation of my being on this
field of death to-day.

Pendleton. Rest assured, my dear General, your slightest wish is a law to me.

Hamilton. I know it, Pendleton. Would that I could more fully requite such a friendship. This is my first and *last* duel, Pendleton. My relative situation, as well in public as in private, enforcing all the considerations which constitute what men of the world denominate honor, imposed upon me, as I think, a peculiar necessity not to decline this meeting. The ability to be in future useful, whether resisting mischief or effecting good, in these crises of our public affairs which seem likely to happen, would probably be inseparable from a conformity with public prejudice in this particular. But should it please God to carry me safely through this emergency I will never be engaged in a similar transaction. (*Raises right hand.*) It is my deliberate intention to employ all my influence in society to discountenance this barbarous custom of duelling.

Pendleton. But if it were possible to arrange a settlement —

Hamilton. It will not be. Burr's ruling passion is his ambition, and he means to step over my dead body into the President's chair. His prejudice against Washington arose from my advancement and the feeling that Washington trusted me and distrusted him. He is implacable in his hatred to me.

(*Enter Burr and Van Ness, R. U. E.*)

Pendleton. They come.

(*They face each other, exchange salutations. Pendleton goes L. Hamilton up stage L. Van Ness R. Burr up stage R. Pendleton and Van Ness walk near centre and shake hands.*)

Van Ness. As the challenging party, it is my duty to suggest what is doubtless impossible, — an amicable arrangement of the difficulties between the principals in this sad affair. Mr. Cooper said in his letter (*takes out paper, proceeds with*), "Gen. Hamilton and Judge Kent have declared in substance that they looked upon Mr. Burr as a dangerous man, and one who ought not to be trusted with the reins of government." To this he added: "I could detail to you a still more despicable opinion which Gen. Hamilton has expressed of Mr. Burr."

Pendleton. Gen. Hamilton has declared that he could not deny charges so "generally" made, nor affirm them. He has ex-

pressed his willingness if Col. Burr would state in "detail" any charges, he would acknowledge or deny them like a gentleman.

Van Ness. The remarks made by Gen. Hamilton, Col. Burr understands to have been of a general nature, and no denial or declaration will be satisfactory unless it be general, so as to wholly exclude the idea that rumors derogatory to Col. Burr's honor have originated with Gen. Hamilton or have been fairly inferred from *anything* he has said.

Pendleton. Can Col. Burr point to one public utterance of Gen. Hamilton in which he has overstepped the limits allowed in political discussion?

Van Ness. Col. Burr, I am sure, would authorize me to say "that secret whispers traducing his fame, and impeaching his honor, are, at least, equally injurious with slanders publicly uttered."

Pendleton. And I am equally positive that Gen. Hamilton would never consent to become a sacrifice, and atone in his own person for the idle gossip of the members of a great political party naturally embittered by a partisan warfare.

(*Van Ness and Pendleton bow to each other, go up stage, exchange a few words with their principals. Burr comes down R. and sits on bank. Hamilton stands L.*)

DUEL SCENE.

To be given in full.

(*Hamilton falls.*)

(*Enter Dr. Hosack and Duke from L. U. E. Pendleton raises Hamilton in his arms. Dr. Hosack bends over him.*)

Duke.

○

Van Ness.

○

Pendleton.

○

Hosack.

○

Burr.

○

Hamilton.

○

Hamilton. (*To Hosack.*) Take care of that pistol, doctor; Pendleton knows I did not intend to fire at him.

Pendleton. Yes, General, I have told the doctor that you did not.

Hamilton. Let Mrs. Hamilton be sent for immediately — let the news be gradually broken to her — but give her hopes. My vision is indistinct — remember, Eliza, my wife, you are a Christian — doctor, this is a mortal wound. (*He sinks, to all appearances lifeless.*)

(*Enter Fred, dragging Kate by the arm, she resisting.*)

Fred. (*Violently.*) Who gave you that money? Point him out to me, that I may thrash him for the poltroon that he is! (*Sees Hamilton, drops his hold on Kate, rushes R.*) Hamilton, dead? And who has murdered the father on the same spot where his son breathed his last?

(*Kate sees Burr and rushes up stage, extending her hands.*)

Kate. (*To Burr.*) And you have escaped death? We do meet again.

Fred. (*Rushing up stage, drawing Kate C.*) Did he (*pointing to Burr*) give you that money?

Kate. Yes, he is a friend of Col. Burr.

Fred. Woman, you know that is Burr, himself!

(*Kate screams and falls senseless, L. of C.*)

It is *he* who has murdered Hamilton. Give me the money — take it — there is blood upon it.

TABLEAU.

Pendleton.

○

Burr.

○

Van Ness.

○

Fred.

○

Dr. Hosack.

○

Duke.

○

Hamilton.

○

Kate.

○

CURTAIN. END OF PROLOGUE.

ACT 1.

SCENE: *Hall in Blennerhassett's mansion on Blennerhassett's island. "The hall was a spacious room, its walls painted a sombre color, with a beautiful cornice of plaster, bordered with a gilt moulding running around the lofty ceiling; while its furniture was rich, heavy, and grand." (Enter Capt. Clarke and Ransome, C.)*

Ransome. Take a seat, massa. I will speak to missis. Massa's taking off his shooting jacket. He 's been out shootin' birds.

Clarke. So he is going to have a game dinner.

Ransome. Reckon not, Massa Clarke. (*Laughs.*)

Clarke. Why not?

Ransome. 'Cause he did n't hit 'em. He 's terribly nearsighted, Massa is. He puts the gun over my shoulder, and then I says, level, now level, Massa Blennerhassett, — there, a little to the right, — so — and then a little to the left — so, and then I say steady, fire! Off goes the gun and off goes the bird too, and so I reckon our company won't have any birds for dinner to-day.

Clarke. Company?

Ransome. Yes, a gentleman from Marietta and two of the most beautifulest ladies you ever saw. The wife is mighty pretty, but the daughter is just as lively as a squirrel.

Clarke. (*Aside.*) I am getting too inquisitive. (*To Ransome.*) What 's the lady's name?

Ransome. They call her Kate.

Clarke. Kate! That name — (*To Ransome.*) Go, Ransome, I'm in haste to see your master.

Ransome. Yes, massa. (*Aside.*) Reckon he don't know any putty gal named Kate. (*Exits C.*)

Clarke. Kate! How that name brings back memories of my Jersey home and that fatal morning! She was determined to keep the money Burr gave her. I gave her the choice — and

she remained true to that villain. I left home in a month from then, came to Ohio, am County Sheriff and captain in the Militia. (*Enter Mrs. Blennerhassett.*) My dear Mrs. Blennerhassett, I am delighted to see you though my business is with your husband.

Mrs. B. My dear Captain, I hope it is n't a very important engagement; if it is, you had better let me arrange it. My husband is a man learned in books, but, I must confess, utterly devoid of practicality.

Clarke. Mr. Blennerhassett is fortunate in having so devoted and competent a partner to protect him from extortion.

Mrs. B. (Laughing.) I can't always do that. Why, only yesterday he employed an individual to gather some mussel shells for him — he is studying conchology — and the party charged him an exorbitant price. My husband asked the reason for the high charge. What do you think the fellow said?

Clarke. Perhaps he said they were scarce.

Mrs. B. Not only that, but gave as a further reason that the diving was so deep. (*Laughs.*)

Clarke. Diving — for mussel shells? (*Laughs.*)

Mrs. B. Yes, and when my husband inquired how deep, the man had the audacity to say in fifteen feet of water. (*Both laugh.*) That convinced my husband and he paid five times their value without any further question. (*Enter Blennerhassett C.*) I'm so glad you are back safe, Harman. I'm always afraid you will meet with some accident when you go shooting. Were you fortunate this morning?

Blennerhassett. Very fortunate — for the birds. They all got away.

Mrs. B. Pardon me, Captain. Here is Captain Clarke, Harman. He comes to see you on business.

Blennerhassett. Glad to see you, Captain. (*Shakes hands.*) Stay to dinner with us, and we can all talk the business over, and Margaret will tell you what is best to do. I'm sorry for your sake, Captain, that I missed those birds.

Clarke. No, I really could n't stay to dinner. Beside, Ransome said you had company.

Blenn. Company, we always have company, or what is the same, we are always ready for it. We set a good table every day and if any guests come we never have to apologize. As to the

company, it is Mr. Reed and wife and daughter from Marietta. Now, Margaret, do you know what I'm going to do after dinner?

Mrs. B. Not go shooting again, I hope —

Blenn. No; sit down, Captain, and hear this little story, and Margaret and you can act as my advisers. Three heads are better than one in such a predicament. (*All sit.*) Now, Mr. Reed owes me \$5,000. Last week his house and furniture, barn and stock, were all burned, and he is to-day without a dollar. What shall I do?

Mrs. B. Loan him some money to start again.

Clarke. Take his notes, and give him a long time in which to pay.

Blenn. I am greatly obliged to my kind advisers. I had made up my mind to give him the choice of two evils. Either a receipt in full to square the debt, or to let the old debt stand and give him a present of an order on the store in Marietta for \$5,000. Now, I think my plan is best.

Clarke. It certainly is, for him.

Blenn. What's best for poor Reed will be best for me, won't it, Margaret?

Mrs. B. In the future, it surely will be, Harman.

Blenn. Then *that's* settled, and he may have his own way about it. What did *you* want to see me about, Captain?

Clarke. To say, we've caught William, the negro, who stole your box of candles, and Justice Parker is waiting for you to come over and identify the goods before he orders William to be flogged.

Mrs. B. I am sorry for the foolish man. I pity him. Cannot the punishment be made as light as possible?

Blenn. The punishment for stealing candles ought to be light, had n't it, Captain? Well, do you know, as soon as I missed these candles, before I could get any more here from Marietta, I went to work on a substitute. I knew that animal substances when left in moist places, or under water, turn to adipocere, and I thought it might take the place of spermaceti. So a week ago I put some meat in an inlet in the river to undergo a change. This morning I went to learn the result.

Mrs. B. If it was a success, I insist that you do not appear against poor William.

Clarke. If the theft has led you to such a valuable discovery, you could afford to be easy with him.

Blenn. No, (*laughing*) William is doomed. The fishes have devoured all the meat, and my theory remains undemonstrated, for the present. (*All laugh.*) I suppose I must go with you and ease poor Parker's mind. It won't take long — only across the river. I will be ready soon. You stay here, Captain, and entertain Mrs. Blennerhassett.

Clarke. It will be the other way, Mr. Blennerhassett.

Blenn. Just as like as not. Do you know, Captain, if you had a nice little wife, like mine, I should be the happiest man in the world?

Clarke. I'm sure *I* should. (*Mrs. B. smiles.*) But why should you be so pleased?

Blenn. My dear Captain, I should have my *own* wife, and I should insist upon being a friend to yours. (*Laughs heartily, exit C.*)

Mrs. B. My husband is unusually jovial to-day. I don't think it is because you have caught William.

Clarke. Nor I, Mrs. Blennerhassett. It is the joy that always comes to the heart when it has decided to do a noble action, such as he will do in Mr. Reed's case. What a happy life you must have, Mrs. Blennerhassett. This constant sunshine of the soul must make your home as near a heaven as the earth can show.

Mrs. B. Such thoughts, when expressed by a young man, lead me to think you are casting an eye into the future. I wish you might have as happy a home as ours.

Clarke. A hopeless wish, Mrs. Blennerhassett, I am sorry to say. It might have been, but I shall never marry.

Mrs. B. But why? That's a woman's way, I know, to ask such a question; but, Capt. Clarke, as a true friend (*going to him*), I ask you again, why?

Clarke. Because I have had a bitter experience.

Mrs. B. But if one experience has been bitter, another may be sweet.

Clarke. If one woman's perfidy has broken my heart, I shall not trust in another woman's love to make it whole again.

Mrs. B. And yet, my dear Captain, there is not in the whole world anything that can make it whole again *but* the love of a true woman.

Clarke. I am tempted to tell you my story.

Mrs. B. If you do, it shall be a sacred trust. (*They sit.*)

Clarke. I am the only son of a rich farmer in one of the Eastern states. I fell in love with one of our servants, a young and handsome girl, of good family, but, being an orphan, forced to work for her support.

Mrs. B. Your father refused his consent?

Clarke. No, like a dutiful son I told him of my choice before I spoke to her, and he consented. I proposed and she accepted me.

Mrs. B. Thus far the course of true love runs smooth.

Clarke. You could never imagine what parted us, so I will say it in one word, *politics*. I chanced to speak in severe terms of a public character, as a man whom I believed then, and I believe now, to be a villain. He shall be nameless. She resented my remarks and said she would never marry me until I retracted my words against him.

Mrs. B. Thus far you are to blame. You were the aggressor, and should have shown you loved the woman more than you respected the man, and you would have conquered.

Clarke. Perhaps you are right, but mark the sequel. By a most miraculous coincidence which I will not explain now, within fifteen minutes after our quarrel, she met the very man about whom we had had the controversy. She was in tears; he asked the cause; she told him, and he gave her money for having defended him.

Mrs. B. And she accepted it?

Clarke. Yes, and gloried in it. I took the money from her and threw it at his feet. But it seems he had given her his address. She left home in about a week, and sought him. He *adopted* her. She dresses in silk and rides in her carriage. She says he is her *friend*. Can you blame me if I look upon her dresses and jewels as the badges of her shame?

Mrs. B. My poor boy, yours was indeed a bitter cup.

Clarke. I left home and came to Ohio. I have prospered. When my father dies I shall be a rich man. I shall never marry, for I still love that woman, but to marry *her* — is impossible.

(Enter Mr. Blennerhassett, dressed for his journey.)

Mr. B. I'm all ready, Captain. Good-bye, Margaret. *(Kisses her.)* I will be home to dinner. Mr. Reed and his family are out boating. I sent Marmaduke to give them a trip to the end of the island. Come, Captain. *(At door.)*

Mrs. B. Good-bye, Harman. *(To Clarke.)* Come and see us often. Now I know your story it is my duty to show my interest and friendship.

Clarke. I most assuredly will, my dear Mrs. Blennerhassett. Good-bye, madam. Coming, Mr. Blennerhassett.

Mr. B. Why, Captain, you seem to be less willing to leave Mrs. Blennerhassett than her devoted husband. I must look to this. *(Both laugh and exit C.)*

Mrs. B. (Sits.) What a strange story — that of Captain Clarke's. I wonder who the man was. Some one about whose name there was a halo of romance that awakened the poor girl's feelings and made her think he was all that was noble and good. Only a girl's fancy, to be sure, but with a young girl fancy is more powerful than reason. With some of us women, fancy is always the strongest.

(Enter Ransome C.)

Ransome. Missus, there 's a gentleman and two ladies just landed, and he asked me if the proprietor would object to his taking a walk on the island.

Mrs. B. Did he give his name?

Ransome. No, missus; but he is a handsome gentleman, and the ladies are the most beautifullest —

Mrs. B. That will do, Ransome. Extend Mrs. Blennerhassett's compliments, and say my husband is away, but will soon return. Ask the gentleman and ladies to come in, and my husband will show them the beauties of the island.

Ransome. (Aside.) I can remember the "come in," but I'm afraid I can't say all that. *(Exit, C., shaking his head.)*

Mrs. B. When I married I had a fancy that Harman would become a great orator, enter Parliament — become — why not — a premier. But he disliked politics and disputation — preferred study and seclusion to life in London, and so we are buried in the wilderness, with everything to make life happy — but with not one thing to make it great.

(*Enter Ransome C.*)

Ransome. The gentleman says that he was curious, and so he landed; but he can't stop, but he sent his card. (*Passes it to Mrs. B.*)

Mrs. B. (Reads.) Aaron Burr — Aaron Burr — he was Vice-President of the United States. No man ever came nearer to being President; I must see *him*. (*To Ransome.*) Tell the gentleman that I must insist upon his accepting the hospitalities of my house.

Ransome. (Aside.) I can remember that. I have said that before. (*Exit C.*)

Mrs. B. How fortunate! The man of all others who can tell me in what way my husband can best use his knowledge for his advancement, *and* for the good of his adopted country. My fancy survives; my ambition is still strong; and if woman's wit can accomplish it my husband shall yet fill the station in life for which his talents fit him — and which (*naïvely*) his wife would try to adorn. (*Enter Ransome C., who ushers in Theodosia, Kate, and finally Aaron Burr*). Pardon my importunity, Mr. Burr, but we have so few visitors from the East —

Burr. Madam, pardon for our intrusion rather than for your hospitality. As in the fairy books, we have found that those who land upon the enchanted isle *must* enter the bower of beauty and pay homage to the princess. (*Advances and kisses Mrs. B.'s hand.*) Allow me, madam, to present my only child, my daughter, Theodosia. (*They shake hands.*) (*Turning to Kate.*) Ah! I have been unjust and untrue, for here is my other child, my adopted daughter, Kate. (*They shake hands.*)

Mrs. B. Be seated, all. Ransome, have three extra plates laid for the dinner.

Burr. But, madam, we cannot intrude in so bold a way upon your privacy.

Mrs. B. You are in the bower of the princess, sir, and the fairy books say that none could leave it without her permission, unless they killed the dragon that guarded the entrance. Go, Ransome.
(*Exit Ransome.*)

Burr. Believe me, madam, I would rather fight the dragon than —

Mrs. B. Remain?

Burr. No; than disobey your slightest wish.

(*Burr takes the ladies' outer garments that they have removed.*)

Mrs. B. (*Aside.*) He is such a man as that girl of Clarke's might have worshipped. (*Turns, takes garments and places them R. To Theodosia.*) Did you enjoy your trip down the river, Miss Burr?

Burr. Pardon me, madam. (*To Theodosia.*) What would *Mari* say — (*To Mrs. B.*) My daughter is married, — Mrs. Theodosia Burr Alston, the wife of Governor Alston of South Carolina.

Mrs. B. And is the other young lady —

Burr. No, she is *Miss Embleton*, with no end of suitors, but with a heart fondly clinging —

Kate. (*Laughing.*) Mr. Burr, you are wrong, you know you are.

Theodosia. No, Kate, *you* are wrong, and father is right. Your heart is fondly clinging — to me — and to (*taking Burr's arm*) father. (*Burr puts his arm around Theodosia and Kate.*)

Burr. Am I not a father to be envied — with two such daughters?

Kate. But if I should marry some young gentleman whom you did not fancy, you would disown me, and give all your love to Theodosia and Gamp.

Mrs. B. Pardon my curiosity, but who is Gamp — another young lady?

Theodosia. No, madam, Gamp is my only son. Father gave him the nickname and calls him by no other.

Burr. His infant lips first spoke the word "gampy" to his grandfather. I turned that into Gampillo or Gamp, and being a word made precious by association, I prefer it to his full name of Aaron Burr Alston. (*To Kate.*) But, Miss Embleton, let me not forget to say I shall never disown you, for you have given me the best of reasons for believing you will never marry a man that I cannot respect.

Theodosia. I *think* you can trust her, father.

Kate. You know you can. (*To Burr.*)

Burr. I know I *do*. My *protégés* never desert or disappoint me. I have good news from Vanderlyn the other day — he whom I rightly named the genius of the roadside.

Mrs. B. There must be a romance connected with that name — the genius of the roadside. I am a lover of the romantic —

Burr. I will tell you the story, madam, with pleasure, but as I am a personage in it, kindly free me from the charge of intentional egotism.

Mrs. B. Certainly, Mr. Burr, and pray do not detract from your own due for fear of being so misjudged.

Burr. (*Bows to Mrs. B.*) The story is this: Some years ago I was called to Albany on business. On my way a wheel tire needed repairs and I stopped at a blacksmith's shop for the purpose. While waiting, I walked around outside the smithy, where my attention was attracted by a sketch in chalk upon a barn door. It was capitally done and I turned towards the smithy to ask the blacksmith the name of the artist, when I saw a small boy regarding me with anxious eyes. "Who drew that picture," said I? "I did," replied the boy to my astonishment. I found he was an orphan, and was working for a farmer in the town. I gave him my card and told him when he wanted to begin the battle of life to come to my house in New York. In less than six months the genius of the roadside presented himself at my door. I sent him to Paris, educated him, and his last letter says he is on the road to fame and fortune.

Mrs. B. How happy the news must make you.

Burr. It does. I know of nothing that gives greater joy than to encourage and aid those who are poor, but talented and ambitious. The greatest pleasure I have ever known was found in directing my daughter's studies.

Theo. And such terrible letters as you used to write me about my handwriting and grammar.

Kate. Yes, and I have a hundred just such letters — they all begin with a good scolding, have a lecture in the middle, and end with words so kind that, like sweets after a nauseous medicine, the disagreeable flavor is all taken away.

Burr. My dear young ladies, we have been very impolite to take so much time to talk of ourselves to the disregard and, no doubt, discomfort of our hostess. Is your husband a native of New England or Maryland, Mrs. Blennerhassett?

Mrs. B. Neither, sir. He was born in Hampshire, England. His father was an Irish gentlemen, but his parents were visiting in England.

Burr. Was he in the English army?

Mrs. B. His inclination has always been to literature and science. He went to school at Westminster, but graduated at Trinity College in Dublin.

Burr. Did he practise law?

Mrs. B. Yes, and was made a Doctor of Laws, in 1790. The troubles in his native land led him to sell his estates to Baron Ventry, and he went to England, where we met.

Burr. Like a true knight errant he went in search of his lady love, and found her.

Mrs. B. Hardly that, for he had a sister in England — the wife of Admiral De Corsey.

Burr. He that was Lord Kinsale?

Mrs. B. Yes; *I* am English, and yet our people pride themselves on their independence. My father was Lieut.-Governor of the Isle of Man. My grandfather was Gen. Agnew —

Burr. Who fell at Germantown?

Mrs. B. Yes, sir; did you ever see him?

Burr. Neither your grandfather nor myself were taken prisoners during the Revolution, and we never met. But I have heard he was a brave man and died like a true British soldier, hating all rebels and loving his king.

Mrs. B. We removed to New York, in 1797. My husband travelled through the States in search of a place to make our home in. He bought the upper part of this island and we settled here in 1798, moving at first into a blockhouse.

Theo. And in seven years only you have made this wilderness blossom like a rose —

Kate. And built this beautiful mansion —

Burr. Which in its design and execution shows the possession of exquisite taste by its owners.

Mrs. B. Yes; my husband's property enabled us to gratify our tastes. Living away from the busy world, this island becomes *our* world, and you can imagine my husband and myself are never happier than when kind fortune sends some guest to our door who can tell us what is going on in dear America, and — dear old England. (*Noise outside.*) My husband has returned. (*Goes up stage C.*)

(*Enter Blennerhassett C.*)

Blenn. (*Meeting Mrs. B. up stage.*) It's all right, Margaret; William escaped without a lash. Parker was indignant, but I could n't recognize the candles, could I, my dear? And so —

Mrs. B. (*Breaking in.*) But, Harman, we have guests. Let me present you. (*To Burr.*) Mr. Burr, allow me to introduce my husband.

Burr. (*Advancing with hand extended.*) I am delighted to make Mr. Blennerhassett's acquaintance.

Blenn. (*Drawing back.*) Burr? What Burr? *Not* Aaron Burr.

Burr. Colonel Aaron Burr, at your service.

Blenn. (*To himself.*) The man who killed Hamilton. (*To Burr.*) You are welcome, sir, to the hospitalities —

Mrs. B. (*To Burr.*) My husband is very nearsighted. (*To Blenn.*) Harman, he is waiting to shake hands with you.

Blenn. I regret it, sir; but I cannot give my hand to the *murderer* of Gen. Hamilton.

Mrs. B. Remember, Harman, he is our guest, and his daughters are present.

Burr. (*To Mrs. B.*) Madam, do not fear. *I* shall not transcend the bounds of hospitality. (*To Blenn.*) Sir, my friend Hamilton, whom I shot, would not have used so harsh a term as *murderer*.

Blenn. But he was at your mercy —

Burr. He was the aggressor, and met the fate that any man invites when he slanders a gentleman, and then refuses reparation. Slander has slain more than the sword.

Blenn. Duelling is not an attribute of a gentleman or a hero. The polished Greek knew nothing of it, the noble Roman was above

it. Rome held in equal detestation the man who exposed his life unnecessarily and he who refused to expose it when the *public good* required it. *Her* heroes were superior to private contests. *They* indulged in no vengeance except against the enemies of their country !

(*Mrs. B. rushes to Blenn., taking his arm, while Theo. and Kate stand close to Burr. Expressive tableau. A pause.*)

Burr. Ladies, you will bear me witness that this unhappy discussion is not of my choosing, and I trust will forgive me if I live over again that sad affair, by recalling some particulars that *must* be unknown to Mr. Blennerhassett. (*To Blenn., impassioned.*) Sir, suppose a mean and cowardly individual should slander you, and not stand up to it when cornered. Suppose you should forbear and forbear, forgive and forgive, — yes, even stoop to remonstrate ! If you had no choice except to slink out of sight, a wretch, degraded and despised, or meet the calumniator on the field and silence him, what would you do ? You are an Irish gentleman, and I can answer for you. You would meet him, as I did. Supposing, when you stood up to fire, he caught your eye and quailed under it like a convicted felon. You would kill him, as I did. Supposing you should find his last will and testament to read like the confessions of a penitent monk. You would despise him, as I do !

Blenn. Had you never braved death but in a duel, your words would have no effect upon me ; but you *both* did your duty in the army of your country — and, I had forgotten, *we* are not Greeks or Romans, but the slaves of cruel *modern* customs. Sir, there is my hand. (*They clasp hands.*) Welcome to Blennerhassett Island !

TABLEAU. CURTAIN.

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

THE NEXT DAY.

SCENE: *Drawing room in Blennerhassett's mansion. "Light, airy and elegant, splendid mirrors, gay-colored carpets, classic pictures, rich curtains and ornaments arranged by Mrs. B. with nicest taste and harmonious effect. Also, quantity of silverware ornamented the sideboards and decorated the tables. The whole establishment was characterized by perfect taste, and without that glow of tinsel finery too common among the wealthy."* Mrs. B. and Theodosia discovered. *Theodosia ill, seated in easy chair L. Mrs. B. kneeling beside her.*

Mrs. B. Dear, do you feel any worse than you did?

Theo. No, my dear friend, and no better.

Mrs. B. But you will soon. I suppose I ought to tell you. I have sent Ransome to Marietta for our dear, good, old doctor, the kindest and the best man in the world, and a fine physician, too.

Theo. You are so kind to such an unwelcome visitor as I am.

Mrs. B. Visitors are *never* unwelcome at this house; and if they fall sick while here, it is our duty to cure them before we allow them to leave us.

Theo. Forgive my ungenerous speech, but I am afraid your dear good doctor won't understand my case. Where is father?

Mrs. B. He is busily talking to Harman. They have been closeted in the study for a couple of hours.

Theo. I'm so sorry.

Mrs. B. Sorry, why, what do you mean? Are you so jealous of your father that you can't allow him to go out of your sight?

Theo. No, no, not that. He is my guardian angel, but I can trust him away from me, for I know he never will desert me while life remains. But I am afraid he will weary your husband with his talking, he is such an ardent lover of political discussion — a man used to partisan warfare, while your husband is so quiet in his taste and life.

Mrs. B. A little animated discussion won't do him a bit of harm, my dear, not half as much as it will for you to worry about it.

(*Enter Ransome C.*) Here's Ransome; is the doctor coming?

Ransome. The doctor's coming but *he* is n't coming.

Mrs. B. Who is n't coming?

Ransome. Why, Dr. Johnson.

Mrs. B. But you said he was coming.

Ransome. So *he* is, but he is n't Dr. Johnson.

Mrs. B. Why not, Ransome? You know we always have Dr. Johnson and you should have asked him and no one else to come.

Ransome. I did, missus; but you see Dr. Johnson is sick abed himself, and *he* was doctoring *him*, and Dr. Johnson said if he was good enough to doctor him he would be good enough to doctor you.

Mrs. B. I understand, now. When is he coming?

Ransome. He came with me, but as he was a stranger I told him as how I would introduce him and make it easier for him.

Mrs. B. That was very thoughtful of you, Ransome; but show him in at once. (*Exit Ransome C.*)

Theo. Your servant, Ransome, is quite a conversationalist, I should imagine.

Mrs. B. Yes, he is a great admirer of my husband's education, and Harman has given him many books to read, and they hunt together and fish together, and argue Scripture together until they have become firm friends, and Ransome looks upon himself as a privileged character and hero.

Ransome. (*At door C.*) Doctor Hosack!

(*Enter Dr. Hosack.*)

Dr. H. (*Advancing to Mrs. B.*) Madam, I am sorry to say Dr. Johnson is suffering from a malarial fever, and he delegated me to call on you professionally. You may count upon my best services.

Mrs. B. Dr. Johnson's recommendation makes you welcome to my home and gives me every confidence in your skill. (*Extends her hand to Dr. H.*)

Dr. H. Madam, how can I serve you?

Mrs. B. My young friend here is in need of your assistance. Mrs. Alston, Dr. Hosack. (*Dr. H. sits by Theodosia.*)

Theo. Doctor, I am afraid your pills and powders will do me no good. My trouble is mental worry and disquiet, which will remain until the cause is removed.

Dr. H. The cause is doubtless, as I have found it in many cases — too much blood; a little bleeding may relieve you.

Theo. (*Starting up, with intensity.*) Yes, blood, that's it. Too much blood, bad blood. That always makes quarrels, doesn't it, sir, and then the bleeding follows. Some die in battle — some on the field of honor, in a duel, but few people with bad blood die in their beds, do they, doctor? (*Throwing herself in a chair.*) Bring the swords or the pistols, let us have the blood drawn at once, doctor. (*Sinks back in chair.*)

Dr. H. (*Going to Mrs. B. who looks apprehensively.*) I am afraid our young friend is going to have a fever. She wanders; put her to bed, my dear madam, and remember, no drink of any kind.

Theo. Are you ready for the bleeding, doctor?

(*Enter Ransome.*)

Ransome. A letter for Mrs. Theodosia Burr Alston!

(*Dr. H. starts back. Theodosia jumps to her feet, rushes to Ransome and grasps the letter.*)

Theo. I thought so — from my husband (*kisses the letter*) whom I have not seen for three long months. My dear madam, and my good doctor, with your kind permission I will go to my room. If this letter tells me that my husband is coming to meet me, I shall soon be as well as ever.

(*Theodosia exit C., followed by Ransome who looks astonished.*)

Dr. H. Pardon my curiosity, madam, but did your servant say "Burr" was the lady's name? Do you know her father?

Mrs. B. Her name *was* Burr; it is Theodosia Burr Alston; her father is Col. Aaron Burr; they are our guests.

Dr. H. Aaron Burr here? Pardon me, madam, but I think Mrs. Alston will soon recover; she will not need my services. I will go at once.

Mrs. B. Did you ever meet Col. Burr?

Dr. H. No ; that is, yes, several years ago.

Mrs. B. Wouldn't you like to renew your acquaintance? He is in my husband's study ; I will call him (*starts to go R.*).

Dr. H. Madam, not for the world ; that is, on no account disturb him. I will go.

Mrs. B. Doctor, your actions speak more than your words. I have no right to be curious about my guests, but I can ask you why you do not wish to meet Col. Burr?

Dr. H. You are right. I will explain. You know that Col. Burr fought a duel —

Mrs. B. With Gen. Hamilton, yes.

Dr. H. It was my misfortune to be the surgeon who was engaged for the possible emergency —

Mrs. B. Did you see the duel?

Dr. H. No, only the sad ending. I shall never forget that picture. There the dying man (*points right*), there Burr (*points up stage L.*), and where we are, stood the woman and her lover.

Mrs. B. What woman? what lover? What were they doing there? This duel was not caused by a woman, was it?

Dr. H. Bless you, no, madam. I must explain all. It seems that Col. Burr had given a young woman some money ; what for I know not—and her lover —

Mrs. B. Tell me no more—tell me no more. I know the sad story only too well—I know the young man. (*Aside.*) Poor Frederic! (*To Dr. H.*) And the young woman—should you know her, if —

(*Enter Kate C.*)

Kate. Excuse my interruption, Mrs. Blennerhassett, but I thought Theodosia might be here.

Mrs. B. She has a letter from her husband, Miss Embleton, and has gone to her room to read it.

Kate. Thank you.

(*Exit, Dr. H. looking fixedly at her as she does so.*)

Dr. H. And *she* is here too?

Mrs. B. She? What do you mean?

Dr. H. I would wager my life that the girl who was on that field of death just left this room.

Mrs. B. I have no doubt of it, doctor. I thank you for your confidence, and can imagine our guests do not arouse very pleasant memories in your mind.

Dr. H. They do not, madam, and with your kind permission I will take my departure.

Mrs. B. Express to Dr. Johnson my earnest hope for his speedy recovery. (*Going to door C. with the doctor.*)

Dr. H. (*At door.*) I will with pleasure, madam. Good morning.
(*Dr. H. exit C.*)

Mrs. B. (*Coming C.*) This is a startling situation. The lover, the maiden, and the "villain," as Frederic calls him, likely to meet at any moment. Now, if they can meet in the right way, all may come out happily. Time may have prepared the way for a reconciliation. Frederic still loves her, she is unmarried and seems fancy free, and Col. Burr must use his influence to make these young people happy. (*Enter Clarke C.*) Why, Capt. Clarke, just the man of all in the world I wished to see. I have astounding news for you.

Clarke. I have some news for you — perhaps equally as astounding. Have you any guests from the East?

Mrs. B. Yes, a gentleman and —

Clarke. And his daughter, and that gentleman is Col. Burr. Is *that* your astounding news?

Mrs. B. Yes; but how did you know? Did you meet Dr. Hosack?

Clarke. Dr. Hosack? Who is he? I know no such man. No, Mrs. Alston's husband is at Marietta in search of his wife. I volunteered to ride here and see if Col. Burr was here. I wish to have a few minutes conversation with him.

Mrs. B. If you find out where *she* is —

Clarke. How do you know that I wish to see Col. Burr about a *she*?

Mrs. B. Because, my poor boy, Dr. Hosack was the surgeon who was on the field when the duel took place, and he has told me all. You revealed to me the story of your life. Fate has brought you face to face —

Clarke. And he shall tell me where she is!

Mrs. B. (Aside.) He must see Col. Burr first. (*To Clarke.*)
And he shall. I will send him to you at once.

(*Exit Mrs. B., R.*)

Clarke. If she is with him, he shall answer to me. If she has left him and is trying to be an honest woman, I will find her — and then! God knows what I shall do *then!* (*Falls in chair.*)

(*Enter Kate C.*)

Kate. That horrid Theodosia has locked herself in, and is crying and laughing over his letter at the same time. She called through the door that *he* was coming, I suppose she means her husband. I wonder if I shall ever await the coming of a *he* with such joy. (*Frederic looks at her.*) There is only one man in the world I would care to meet.

Clarke. (Rising.) Kate!

Kate. (Turns.) Frederic! (*Totters, Clarke catches her, leads her to chair L.*)

Clarke. (Regarding her.) You said there was only one man in the world you cared to meet. Am I that man?

Kate. I *was* thinking of *you*.

Clarke. And I have been thinking of you for two long years, — since that day when you deserted me for a life with him. Had I met you a thousand miles away from him I would say that I have never ceased to love you; but when I find you in his company I can only say —

Kate. That you *hate* me.

Clarke. No, that I hate him, and he shall answer to me for his actions. Mrs. Blennerhassett has gone to bring him here, so I may speak with him.

Kate. You must not meet —

Clarke. It lies with you to prevent our meeting, and the consequences that will surely come from it.

Kate. What can *I* do?

Clarke. Come with me, this very instant. I will make you my wife — for I love you — but you must come now and swear you will never look upon his face again.

Kate. Desert my benefactor in such a way? A man who has always treated me like a daughter — given the poor orphan girl what she never knew before — the blessing of a father's love — Frederic, you ask too much. Let me say good-bye to him, and I will go.

Clarke. Not one word, Kate. Hark! They are coming; if he enters this room before we leave it — as a man of honor I can do but one thing — demand an explanation — which he will refuse. I shall challenge him — and one of us will die, and end this heartache —

Kate. You are determined on this course?

Clarke. Before Heaven, I swear I will take no other.

Kate. Then come —

Clarke. Mine at last! (*Embraces her and then they rush out C., just as Ransome enters.*)

Ransome. Now, if this was n't bright daylight, I should suspect that was an elopement.

(*Enter Mrs. B. Blenn., and Burr.*)

Mrs. B. (*Looking round.*) Not here? Where can he be! Ransome, have you seen Mr. Clarke?

Ransome. I can hardly say I saw him, he was going out so speedy. But I caught a glimpse.

Mrs. B. Where did he go? And when?

Ransome. He went through that door just now, with Miss Embleton, and they seemed to be in a drefful hurry.

Burr. I can explain it, Mrs. Blennerhassett. The young man, whom I distinctly recall, met the young lady. She explained matters; he is satisfied, and they have gone to smooth down their feathers before they face us again and say they are going to build a nest of their own. Kate is a splendid girl. I have educated her as if she were my own, and if she loves the young man, he shall have her with my blessing.

Mrs. B. I am so glad it has all come out so happily.

Blenn. What is it all about, Margaret? I am so full of Col. Burr's land schemes that this love affair has escaped my attention.

Burr. Your wife will tell you all, Mr. Blennerhassett; but let me explain a few points of my plan to your wife whom I know must be a woman of business.

Blenn. Yes, you *must* tell Margaret. I never engage in any business without her advice.

(*Enter Theodosia C.*)

Theo. (*Running down.*) Father, he's coming. He got your letter and is on the way. He says he may arrive before his letter does. He will go to Marietta, and await a letter from you, if you have gone beyond. (*Shows letter.*) See what a long letter he wrote me, father.

Burr. And how did he end it? No word for me, his affectionate father-in-law?

Theo. Why, yes, he says, kiss for me those who love me, and so I must kiss you, even if there are so many here. (*Embraces her father.*) Now, I'm going to look out on the river and see if he is coming. (*Runs out C.*)

Mrs. B. What an all-impassioned, sensitive, thrilling creature your daughter is, Colonel Burr.

Burr. She is all brain and heart, madam, and I sometimes fear that the brain is too active and the heart too loving for the fragile casket Nature has placed them in.

Blenn. (*Breaking in.*) Would n't it be a good time now, Colonel Burr, to explain that land business to Margaret?

Burr. (*Laughing.*) Your husband has all the impetuosity of the Celtic race; how different from our Jersey phlegm. Why, it seems born in a Jerseyman to never do to-day what he can *just as well* put off until to-morrow. And that's the reason our citizens live to such an advanced age. (*All laugh.*)

Blenn. Well, Colonel, if you don't tell Margaret to-day, I certainly shall.

Burr. Perhaps it is better that *you* should. If she agrees with your present opinion, our way will be plain; if she disagrees with us, then we must combine our forces and convince her by facts and irresistible arguments. While you are so engaged, with your kind permission, I will join my daughter. (*Bows and exit C.*)

Blenn. (*Looking after Burr.*) He is a wonderful man!

Mrs. B. So are you, Harman, — or you might be if you would use your talents in a way to let the world *see* your ability. What does Colonel Burr have in mind?

Blenn. A great scheme. A Baron Bastrop owns a large tract of land on the Washita River, in the Territory of Louisiana. Colonel Burr wishes me to join him and others in purchasing this land, with two purposes in view: One, to divide the land into estates and sell them, thus realizing an immense fortune between us. The other purpose is to establish a colony of intelligent and wealthy individuals, and rear around us a society remarkable for the refinements of civil and social life. What do you think of the idea, Margaret?

Mrs. B. It seems a grand idea, and one in which, if you join him, you will find an opportunity to become what Nature intended you should be, — a leader, and perhaps a ruler of men.

Blenn. You have high aims for me, Margaret. I am, I will allow, somewhat pleased with the scheme; but I am afraid I should soon wish for the old study, and the laboratory, and my telescope, and 'cello —

Mrs. B. All the pleasures you name you can enjoy there as well as here, and in a large colony *I* shall have associations and opportunities that our present isolation now denies me.

Blenn. Are you unhappy here, Margaret?

Mrs. B. No, Harman, no, a thousand times no. No woman ought to be unhappy with such a husband and such a home. But you would become famous there; here there are none to appreciate your worth.

Blenn. But if I were happiest *here*?

Mrs. B. Then your wife would say, remain *here*, for your happiness is hers.

Blenn. (*Embracing his wife.*) And yours is mine; and if there is any other place where you would be happier than here, there I will make a home for you.

(*Enter C., Colonel Burr, Theodosia, and Alston.*)

Theo. My husband, Mrs. Blennerhassett, Mr. Blennerhassett.

Mrs. B. I am glad, Mr. Alston, that you find your wife in such good health and spirits. This morning she was so ill, that I sent to Marietta for a physician.

Alston. A Dr. Hosack? I met him on the way. A gentleman named Clarke volunteered this morning to visit Mr. Blennerhassett and see if Col. Burr were here. Soon after his departure, my impatience overcame me, and learning the road was a good one for horseback riding I started, expecting to meet him on his return. Instead, I met the doctor, asked if I was on the right road; he said he was on his way back from Mrs. Blennerhassett's, said Mrs. Alston was ill, and my horse bore me here at his fastest gallop.

Mrs. B. The road to Marietta *is* a good one. Many a time have I made the trip of an afternoon for business or pleasure. We have half a dozen fine saddle horses. What do you say, Col. Burr, to a horseback ride to the wilderness at the other end of the island; it will give us all a splendid appetite for dinner, and complete Mrs. Alston's cure.

Burr. I will follow your lead, madam, to the river's bank.

Mrs. B. I often ride into the river.

Burr. Then I will follow, to the bottom of the river, if you but lead.

Alston. Will Mr. Blennerhassett accompany us?

Theo. Why, certainly, it would be so impolite to desert our host.

Blenn. Don't mind me. I never ride horseback. Ransome is always my driver; besides, I have so much to do in the laboratory I am in no danger of suffering from *ennui*.

Alston. As we have no word in the English language for *ennui*, we should not suffer from it, certainly.

Burr. No; but a Frenchman said *ennui* in France was synonymous with *existence* in England, and so the English don't need any other word.

(*All laugh, and Mrs. B., Theo., Col. B., and Alston, exit R. Ransome enters C.*)

Ransome. Massa Blennerhassett?

Blenn. Yes, Ransome, what do you want?

Ransome. A man wants to see you, a sailor man.

Blenn. Well, show him in.

Ransome. (*Going to Blenn.*) He says he wants to speak to you very privately, and no one in the house must know he is here, nor when he goes.

Blenn. Have my wife and the others gone to ride?

Ransome. The ladies have gone to drive, and the gentlemen have gone to the stables with Philander.

Blenn. The coast is clear then; admit the man. (*Exit Ransome.*) Who can it be? Some old sailor wants assistance; but why so much secrecy? I won't see him, but send some money to him by Ransome. (*Calls.*) Here, Ransome; here, Ransome.

(*Enter Ransome, C.*)

Ransome. Here, sir, here is the man.

(*Enter Graham. Graham is dressed as a sailor, whiskers, coat, hat. He looks at Ransome, who slowly withdraws.*)

Blenn. My good man, what can I do for you? How much money do you want?

Graham. (*Sailor style.*) Say, Cap'n, are we alone? No danger of being rung out for a storm?

Blenn. I can't imagine any reason for your visit unless for assistance, and no reason whatever for so many precautions, so much mystery. Who are you?

Graham. In the first place I am no sailor (*begins to remove his disguise*), in the second place my name is Graham, an agent of the United States Government on special service.

Blenn. And the nature of that special service —

Graham. (*Having removed his disguise.*) I have my suspicions that it will not be necessary for me to explain my visit here.

Blenn. Your innuendo under certain circumstances might be insulting. As I do not know the nature of your suspicions, nor to what knowledge of mine you so vaguely refer, I will give you an opportunity for further explanation. Be seated, sir. (*They sit.*)

Graham. Pardon me, sir, but we detectives always go on the supposition that our clew is a good one, and our suspicions sure to be proved correct.

Blenn. Your last remark is more unsatisfactory than the first. What have I to do with detectives?

Graham. You have a visitor, a certain Mr. Burr.

Blenn. My visitor is Col. Aaron Burr, ex-Vice-President of the United States!

Graham. Exactly! There can be no mistake about the man. He is the *Mr. Burr* I meant. Excuse a leading question, but what answer have you given to his requests for you to join him in his treasonable plot?

Blenn. (*Jumping up.*) Treasonable plot! Sir, your imagination has run away with your reason. He has mentioned no treasonable plot.

Graham. (*Aside.*) I am too early. (*To Blenn.*) Then he has broached no scheme to you *as yet*?

Blenn. Where are your proofs that you are what you say you are?

Graham. Here, sir, (*shows them*) and here is my commission signed by Thomas Jefferson, the President.

Blenn. (*Examining them.*) They seem to be conclusive, sir. I am an Irishman by birth and as such I have become used to plots and government emissaries. I had hoped my adopted country would have no use for these instruments of despotism. I am sorry to learn that the Government of a free country is obliged to employ spies to track the footsteps of those with whom it differs politically. Plain talk now, after we have exchanged these mutual compliments, can do no harm. What are your suspicions as regards myself?

Graham. Plainly, then, sir, that you are aiding and abetting this Colonel Burr in a scheme calculated to disturb the peace of the country.

Blenn. False, sir — false in every respect. I am the last man in the world who would disturb the peace or impair the prosperity of the United States. Weary of political strife in my native land, I sought and have found an asylum in America, and I could never violate its tranquillity; and I have no doubt your charges against Colonel Burr are as weak as your suspicions of myself have proved to be.

Graham. And yet, Colonel Burr is known by the Government to have come West to ascertain the sentiments of the people of the Western States upon the subject of a separation from the Atlantic States.

Blenn. Impossible — the union of these States, cemented by the blood of its patriots, can never be broken at the will of any State

that has covenanted to obey the Constitution. Like a marriage in the sight of God, *man* can never decree nor allow a divorce.

Graham. True and patriotic words, Mr. Blennerhassett. Would that all Americans thought so, and that none may ever think otherwise. Then you have no information to give the Government on this matter?

Blenn. None, whatever, sir. Colonel Burr has never mentioned the subject to me, and, if he does, I will answer him as I have you, and, in addition, inform the President of his treasonable acts at the earliest moment.

Graham. The President, sir, shall be informed of your patriotic feelings and intentions. Allow me, sir, to thank you for your courtesy, and to —

Blenn. (*Pointing L.*) You can put on your disguise in that room. From it there is a door leading to the lawn, from which you can make your exit without meeting my guests. (*Going up C.*) I hear their voices — they are back from their ride.

Graham. Thank you, sir, for your foresight! (*Blenn. goes to door C., looking back; Graham to door R., with his disguise. Blenn exit C. Graham runs up C., looks out, then back to door L.*) Perhaps I may wish to see and hear more — from your guests.
(*Exit L.*)

(*Enter Blenn., Mrs. B., and Theo., in riding costumes, Col. Burr and Alston.*)

Mrs. B. Yes, we've had a splendid time.

Burr. Your wife is a break-neck rider, Mr. Blennerhassett, and easily distanced me, old soldier though I am.

Theo. She made me think of an English hussar charging the enemy.

Alston. Had the English brought such riders with them we should still be subjects of King George, Mr. Blennerhassett.

Mrs. B. Your flattery, gentlemen, is highly appreciated. To-morrow we will have a twenty-mile gallop, and see if our horsemanship is as reliable as it is brilliant.

Burr. That is so; the forced march is oftentimes a greater achievement than the brilliant charge.

Mrs. B. Now, we will sit down, while the subject is on our minds, and decide on Colonel Burr's proposition. O, Harman, Colonel

Burr has explained his scheme to us all, and all of us agree with him that it is a brilliant idea, — a realization of the dreams of the poets and the hopes of philosophers.

Burr. Yes; and who knows but that our model State may become a real Utopia in which the true, the beautiful, and the good may govern our rulers; that Mr. Blennerhassett may become the conservator of our liberties; that Alston and myself may aid him, respectively, in diplomacy and the art of war; that his lovely wife may grace the position of first lady in the land, while my daughter and Kate — where is Kate? — act as her maids of honor.

Blenn. (Excitedly.) You have outlined the picture, my dear Colonel, and I will fill it in. I would have a State in which science and art would so absorb our time and interest our minds that politics and diplomacy, intrigue and war, would fall into disfavor and disuse. The duties of life should become pleasures, its pleasures patriotic duties. A land in which those above would always strive to lift to a higher level those who were below. To secure such a paradise on earth as that I would give my labor, my fortune, and my life.

Burr. All this is possible, yes, sure of accomplishment if you and a few others endowed with wealth and education will be the pioneers. But there must be one who must be first — then others will follow his lead.

Blenn. Then I will be that first. If mine the greater risk, then mine the greater joy if success crowns our efforts. Col. Burr, you can rely upon the word of Harman Blennerhassett.

Burr. I do — and will. *(They clasp hands C.)*

(Enter Graham in disguise, from door L. Blenn. drops Burr's hand, and starts back.)

Graham. (Sailor style, to Blenn.) You must have forgotten me. I was waiting for you in there *(points L. Blenn. starts.)* I'll come again some day when you have n't got so much business on hand. But I'll take your answer to the President — *of the company.*

(Blenn. looks away. All the company look at Graham who slowly walks up stage towards door C.)

(Enter Kate C., followed by Clarke. Kate runs to Col. Burr and falls at his feet. Graham stops L. U.)

Burr. Here's my little girl back again. She has made it up with her lover, and now she comes for her father's blessing. You have it—

Kate. (*Jumping up.*) No, no, not that. He is as bitter against you as ever and called you names that I should not dare repeat before you.

Fred. For the last time I ask you, Kate, will you forsake that man?

Kate. (*Throwing herself into Burr's arms.*) This is your answer.

Burr. (*Caressing her.*) And, Kate, I will never forsake you.

TABLEAU.

END OF ACT II.

Fred.

O

Graham.

O

Blenn. Mrs. B.

O

O

Kate. Col. Burr.

O

O

Theo. Alston.

O

O

ACT III.

SCENE: *Same as in Act II. Time, 1806, a month later. Company discovered when curtain rises, seated around the room.*

Dr. H. *Alston.* *Kate.*
○ ○ ○

Blenn. *Burr.*
○ ○



Theo.
○

Mrs. B.
○

Mrs. B. (*Rising and coming to *.*) Yes, Harman and myself are both great lovers of the drama — and admirers of Shakespeare. But, living here, we have no opportunities to visit the theatre.

Burr. I suppose then that reading takes the place of counterfeit presentment.

Mrs. B. Yes, but we have improved somewhat in that.

Theo. I should like to see *you* act, my dear Mrs. Blennerhassett.

Mrs. B. We do not act, but for our own pleasure, and sometimes with the intention of pleasing our guests, we all take part in the reading. I have copied out the lines for the characters of various plays; each of us takes a book and reads at the proper time. In that way we secure that attention and interest which makes the reading a pastime for us all.

Kate. It must be charming.

Blenn. Margaret, we have the material here for a tragedy. Let us read "Macbeth."

Burr. Yes; I'll be Macduff; your husband Macbeth, and you, *his ambitious wife.*

Mrs. B. (*Taking books from table.*) Nay, not so; *you* will be Macbeth (*passes book*), my husband Duncan and Banquo. (*Passes books.*)

Blenn. (*With a laugh.*) In a double sense your victim, of Glamis, (*to Col. Burr*) and Cawdor.

Mrs. B. (*To Theo. and Kate.*) You shall be the witches. (*Passes books.*)

Burr. They *are* witches.

Mrs. B. (*To Dr. H. and Alston.*) And you, gentlemen?

Dr. H. Is there a doctor in the play?

Alston. Yes, two, one English and the other Scotch. We'll both be doctors, and when we are not wanted professionally, we'll be the audience.

Burr. I'll not consent to that unless they will agree to applaud everything.

Dr. H. and Alston. We will — we will !

(*Mrs. B. comes C., with books. Insert speech. Scenes from "Macbeth," to be selected. Suggest, Macbeth and Banquo's meeting with the witches. Then Lady Macbeth's letter — then, the murder scene, in part. If desired, sleep-walking scene.*)

(*Enter Ransome C., with letter. Starts back — drops letter.*)

Blenn. What is it, Ransome?

Ransome. A — letter, sir — letter — for — Mrs. Alston.

Theo. (*Running C.*) From home. (*Takes letter, breaks seal, reads.*) Oh — he's ill, I must go at once — oh ! he may be dead. (*Falls in chair. Burr, Alston, Kate, Mrs. B. rush forward.*)

Burr. Who is ill — not Gamp? (*Exit Ransome C.*)

Alston. (*Taking letter, reads.*) Yes ; my sister, in whose charge we left him says he is ill — not dangerously — but Gamp says his mother must come back to him, or he will die.

Theo. And his mother *must* go to him at once. There must be no time lost.

Blenn. You have two hours before the stage leaves Marietta for the East.

Theo. I will be ready if our kind friends will aid me — I am so weak.

(*Mrs. B. and Kate lead Theo. out R.*)

Burr. (*To Alston.*) And you —

Alston. I must go with her. And, yet, in her weak state, the long and arduous journey — no proper medical care. I am fearful of the result to her.

Dr. H. I was going east in a week's time for a business purpose. I will accompany you, and if my skill —

Burr. Doctor, you have won my gratitude for life. My daughter is dearer to me than my *own* life, and yet, in such a case as this, how powerless is a father's love.

Blenn. My man Ransome had better go with them to Marietta, and farther, (*to Alston*) if you desire. If you wish, you can take him home with you. He is a great traveller, and we have plenty of servants and to spare.

Burr. He would be of great service.

Blenn. Then he goes; that is settled. I will not hear one word from you. (*To Alston.*) Sir, you must not refuse.

Alston. I will not refuse your great kindness; but I must say more than one word to thank you for your —

Burr. And I will remain here after you are gone and keep on thanking him, Joseph. But you and the Doctor had better prepare at once for your journey.

Alston. We will. Come, Doctor. (*Alston and Dr. H. exit R.*)
(*Enter Ransome, C.*)

Blenn. Come here, you rascal.

Ransome. Yes, Massa. (*Comes C.*)

<i>Blenn.</i>	<i>Ran.</i>	<i>Burr.</i>
O	O	O

Blenn. What's the matter — anything on your mind?

Ransome. Yes, Massa. Man to see you — sailor man —

Blenn. (*Aside.*) He here again. (*To Ransome.*) Well, his business is not important. Let him wait. Ransome, I am going to send you away.

Ransome. Good Lor', don't, Massa. I will be a good nigger. (*Drops on his knees and clasps Mr. Blennerhassett's knees.*) Don't send poor Ransome away. How will you ever shoot the birds, or catch fish, or —

Blenn. If I don't have you to do it for me? I don't know. I think it will be necessary to buy my game.

Burr. Learn to do that, Mr. Blennerhassett, and I will soon make a politician — no, I mean a statesman, of you. The kind marksman sells both game and the credit of shooting it — for cash.

Blenn. So much the worse then for honest sport, and the country of the politician — I mean statesman. Get up, Ransome. (*Ransome rises.*) I am not going to send you to South Carolina because you are a bad nigger, but because you are a good one.

Ransome. Did you say Souf Car'lina, Massa?

Blenn. Yes, South Carolina. You are going home with Mrs. Alston and her husband. Are you sorry you are going?

Ransome. Sorry for some, and glad for some, Massa. My old mother lives down in Souf Car'lina.

Blenn. And you shall go and see her. Col. Burr, tell your son-in-law that Ransome is to see his old mother before he returns; and here is money —

Burr. No, I will pay that, or my son will; no refusal; you are as obstinate a man as myself. I will see if I can be of any service to my daughter. (*Bows and exit R.*)

Blenn. Show in the man, Ransome, and then get ready for your journey. Don't stop to say good-bye *now*.

Ransome. Bless you, Massa, and my old mother will bless you too. (*Exit Ransome C.*)

Blenn. How cheap blessings are.

Ransome. (*Off stage C.*) This way, sir.

Blenn. And curses too.

(*Enter Graham, in sailor's dress, C., followed by Ransome.*)

Graham. (*To Ransome, sailor style.*) My colored friend, don't be too particular about showing me the way. I've been here before. (*Ransome exit C. To Blenn., natural tone.*) Do you recognize me?

Blenn. I have a good memory, but I never before knew that the government of the United States used detectives in disguise to do its bidding.

Graham. That is because detectives seldom disclose their identity to suspected parties.

Blenn. (*Rising, excitedly.*) Sir!

Graham. (*Coolly.*) But in your case, as *you* are not a suspected party, I throw off my disguise.

Blenn. If I am not a suspected party, why come here at all?

Graham. Because there is a dark and portentous storm-cloud gathering in the horizon which will burst in the near future, and cause sad fatalities within that unsuspecting circle — your home. The Government sends me, not to suspect you, but to warn you.

Blenn. Were I really in danger of being innocently drawn into a questionable proceeding, this solicitude of the government would be paternal, friendly, and worthy of my deepest gratitude. Such *not* being the case, I have no such feelings of gratitude, but I will admit that I have united with Col. Burr in a plan for colonizing and improving a large tract of country, and Col. Burr has already paid a Kentucky gentleman forty thousand dollars for it.

Graham. And what reason does Burr give for buying this land, — is he going to found an empire?

Blenn. Yes.

Graham. (*Aside.*) This is a confession. (*To Blenn.*) Then Burr has spoken of his designs?

Blenn. Col. Burr and myself have a design in common, — to found an empire of sturdy yeomanry, willing emigrants from oppression in Europe. We shall sell this land in one-hundred acre lots for farms, and —

Graham. You two gentlemen will govern this country *within* a country?

Blenn. No; but we hope to make a million dollars by the scheme.

Graham. And this you *think* is all?

Blenn. It is all — of our dealings, of my admissions — and of our interview. Do you know the way out, sir?

Graham. Thank you, yes, (*aside*) and the way in again. (*Going up stage C.*) I can take a hint, sir.

Blenn. (*Curtly.*) Take it then, and your departure at the same time, sir.

Graham. As you say, sir, — but when the President of the United States advises me to, I shall make bold to call on you again. Good morning, sir. (*They bow, Graham exit C.*)

Blenn. Am I mistaken in this man Burr? (*Thinks.*) I think not. I wish all men were as frank and honorable. No; such a man *could* not be base — no such loving father could intentionally bring dishonor on such a daughter. This suspicion of Burr and his friends is but part of a system of political and social ostracism. Perhaps President Jefferson, successful as he is, is yet jealous of his defeated rival, and hopes to crush him utterly. If that *is* his scheme, he will find that a Blennerhassett will not aid him. The true Irish blood always boils when rulers plot against the people!

(*Enter R., Burr, Mrs. Blenn., Kate, Theo., while Dr. H., Ransome and Alston, enter from C. Theo., Dr. H., Alston and Ransome are attired in out-door garments.*)

Burr. Now, my darling Theo, say *au revoir*, not farewell, to your dear good friends, Mr. and Mrs. Blennerhassett, to your sister Kate, and to your father. (*Theo. falls into his arms.*)

Theo. It is so sad to part from you all. Give me a little time, father.

Burr. Doing unpleasant things *gradually* is great folly; a protracted torment. Have you forgotten your father's precepts?

Mrs. B. They must be Spartan in their severity, Col. Burr. Perhaps a mother's tender teachings have had more influence than your *own*.

Theo. (*With animation.*) I had rather not live, than not be the daughter of such a man.

Mrs. B. Colonel, I am answered.

Burr. My daughter, *we* poor mortals do not influence fate. Fate governs us with an iron, inflexible hand; and it's our duty, as humble instruments, to be passive. Control yourself, my child.

Theo. 'T is not for myself so much as for those I love. I go from one sorrow to another.

Burr. Have no fear for me. With my good friend Blennerhassett I have business in view. We shall be busy, and busy men are healthy, happy, and long lived. If anything *does* happen, Theo, I shall wish you with me.

Theo. If the worst comes, I will leave everything to suffer with you.

Burr. If the *worst* comes, I shall be through suffering. (*To Alston.*) Take her, Joseph. She is moody and fretful; she is ill-fitted for cold blasts and wintry storms; guard her well, Joseph. (*Kisses her forehead.*) *Au revoir*, Theo; tell Gamp to get well at once or incur my deep displeasure.

(*Mr. and Mrs. Blenn., and Kate say good-bye to Theo. They embrace and kiss each other. Ransome comes forward to Mrs. Blenn.*)

Ransome. Good-bye, missis. I'll tell my poor old mother all about you.

Mrs. B. And when you come back, you can tell me all about your dear old mother.

Blenn. Is the carriage ready?

Ransome. Yes, massa. All ready, ladies and gentlemun.

(*Ransome exit C.*)

Burr. (*To Mr. and Mrs. B.*) Stay here, please, and I will see them safely under way. One touch more at her heartstrings will break her down and render the journey impossible for days. (*Going up stage.*) The carriage is ready, the time is but sufficient. Good-bye, Joseph, Dr. Hosack. (*Shakes hands.*) The carriage is here. Come.

(*Col. Burr leads his daughter out C. Business. Dr. H. and Alston take leave of Mr. and Mrs. Blennerhassett and Kate. Exit C. Kate goes to door and looks out.*)

Kate. They're off. (*Blenn. jumps up excitedly.*)

Mrs. B. What's the matter, Harman?

Blenn. I forgot to say good-bye to Ransome, and I promised him I would. (*Runs out C. hastily.*)

Kate. (*Coming to Mrs. Blenn.*) Your husband is tender-hearted too, Mrs. Blennerhassett, you must love him dearly.

Mrs. B. When two persons love each other dearly, both are apt to be tender-hearted.

Kate. I'm afraid I am not tender-hearted.

Mrs. B. That is because you do not love — the right one — as dearly as you ought.

Kate. Do you think so, Mrs. Blennerhasset? Did I do wrong in being true to my benefactor?

Mrs. B. Not wrong in being true to him, — not wholly right, in not being true to both. You are both self-willed and impetuous. The feeling that divides you is unworthy of both of you, and no one would like to see you happy more than your benefactor. You made a scene, and he had but one course to pursue. All lovers' quarrels should be duels without seconds, not battles, with spectators on the house tops.

Kate. Thank you, Mrs. Blennerhassett. I wish I could be as happy as you are. I will go to my room and think of your words, and of —

Mrs. B. Frederic?

Kate. And of Theodosia. (*Exit R.*)

Mrs. B. A proud girl, but I think a true and honest one. I will yet bring Frederic and Kate together.

(*Enter Blenn. and Col. Burr, arm in arm C.*)

Burr. The confidence you have seen fit to place in me is extremely flattering, and it would seem that there has been, without explanation, a sort of consent between our minds.

Mrs. B. (*Coming C.*) I agree with you, Col. Burr. You are the only man I ever saw who could appreciate my husband, and, at the same time, fulfil all his ideal of what a friend and companion should be.

Burr. To hear such commendation is pleasant, but doubly so when your voice and manner show plainly that your husband's choice of a friend is not repugnant to yourself.

Mrs. B. Repugnant? I am delighted that Harman has found some one who dares to tell him that Blennerhassett Island is *not* the world.

Blenn. I wish all parts of the world were as enjoyable as Blennerhassett Island.

Burr. So do I. So does the lazy oriental prince wish always to be surrounded with effeminate comforts. Such pleasure is merely passive. The pursuit of personal gratification invariably ends in selfishness.

Blenn. Well, to please you both, for I see you are in league against me, I will acknowledge that I am both lazy and selfish, and that I can live happily and die peacefully in this little paradise.

Mrs. B. But think, Harman. You have a growing family; they will soon demand advantages that others can bestow better than ourselves, and, with such large outgo and no income, your fortune will steadily diminish.

Burr. I have no doubt your wife states the case just as it is. Pardon me if I presume when I say I think you are deserving of a higher sphere. Your talents and acquirements seem to have destined you for something more than vegetable life, and since the first hour of our acquaintance I have considered your seclusion as a fraud on society.

Blenn. You drew your picture, Margaret, in too dark colors. We are not poor, nor in danger of becoming so; but the increased expenses you mention may swallow the interest and menace the principal. My object in joining Col. Burr in his land scheme is to increase my private fortune, but to do that will not draw me from my home.

Burr. Not at first; but if our success equals my anticipations, we shall need your presence, and I know your wife will be filled with pleasure when you are restored to the social and active world.

Blenn. For Margaret's sake and that of our dear children, I will try to conquer my *selfish* delight in this, my island paradise. Can I do more than ask to be admitted to partnership in any speculation which may present itself to your judgment as worthy to engage my talents?

Burr. Frankly and nobly spoken, sir. Let us be seated while I unfold to yourself and wife a scheme which has in it the elements of wealth, pleasure, popularity, and, it may be, in time, *power*.
(*They sit.*)

Mrs. Blenn.

○

Burr.

○

Blenn.

○

The subject of securing land in the Southwest has been in my mind for years. This purchase from Col. Charles Lynch of four hundred thousand acres, lying between the Sabine and Natchitoches rivers, is my first move towards the realization of my projects. I have paid down five thousand dollars —

Blenn. I will be ready with my part at the time appointed.

Burr. (*Graham looks in L.*) But this land purchase is but a commercial enterprise; but it will lead to a glorious military adventure in which I wish you to engage. (*Graham exit L.*)

Blenn. (*Jumping up excitedly.*) Then I wash my hands of the whole affair, Col. Burr. (*Mrs. Blenn. and Burr rise and look at Blenn. with astonishment.*) I am a citizen of the United States, and I will never bear arms except in its defence, obedient to that law that makes it a pleasure for a patriot to sacrifice his life for his native land.

Burr. Give me your hand, (*Blenn. draws back*) and rest assured that Aaron Burr will never ask you to raise your hand against others than enemies of our country.

Blenn. (*Aside.*) Perhaps the President was right, after all. (*Hesitatingly.*) I do not understand you.

Burr. I see you do not, and it is my fault. Let us resume our seats. (*They sit.*)

Blenn. Mrs. B. Burr.
O O O

I am in a position to know some official secrets. Among them is the probability of a war with Spain.

Blenn. (*Excitedly.*) If the United States declares war against Spain I am willing to follow you, Col. Burr, in any legal enterprise for the subjugation of the Spanish dominion in this country, — like the treatment of *my* native land, the relics of an abominable and heartless tyranny.

Burr. And when I tell you that my plan is to wait until this war cloud is ready to burst, then enlist recruits in the West from among the purchasers of our lands, form a private expedition against Mexico, conquer it with its untold wealth, and then lay the prize at the feet of a grateful country, shall we fail in obtaining our reward? They will not and cannot deprive us of the honest glory that we shall win. Yourself the Governor, I your trusted friend, your wife the first lady in the land, my daughter and Kate at her side. Can you look on this picture of life, action, heroic, patriotic accomplishment and still think of books and crucibles, of flowers and music? Are there any sweeter sounds than the trumpet's clangor and the cannon's roar, where the trumpet shouts freedom to an oppressed people, and the cannon secures their liberty? But I am excited. No doubt my words will terrify your wife and disturb her peace of mind. She may one day wish that I had never entered your happy home.

Mrs. B. Do not forget, Col. Burr, that my grandfather was a soldier, and that the daughters of England are as brave as her sons. Your words make my blood thrill in my veins, but Harman is as cold as a stone.

Blenn. Oh, no, Margaret, I am excited, but I don't show it by words or looks. But I am thinking; and that reminds me that I have been *experimenting* in my laboratory on a new explosive compound which will render gunpowder useless in warfare. Come to the laboratory, and while I am experimenting we can talk over this scheme of *yours*.

Burr. This scheme of *ours*.

Mrs. B. This scheme of *ours*, Harman.

Blenn. Well, this scheme of *ours*.

(*Blenn. exit R., followed by Col. Burr and Mrs. B., she leaning on his arm. Enter Graham from L. cautiously.*)

Graham. I have heard enough to warrant me in taking the decisive step which the President left to my discretion. I have provided first by arranging for the military authorities of Ohio to make the arrest. An officer named Clarke is in command of the detail. I must see him at once. The safest way out is the old way, by the veranda. (*Exit L. cautiously.*)

(*Enter Clarke in uniform, C.*)

Clarke. I wonder what is going on. I am detailed to await secret orders, and with my company have spent the day so far on the other side of the river. I could not resist the temptation to see Kate once more. I hear that two gentlemen and a lady went to Marietta this morning — one was Burr, the other his son, and the lady his daughter. Kate must be alone here. I will do as Kate says. What can it matter, after all, what I think or say of Col. Burr? Is it any more for me to say I do not hate Burr when I do, than it is for me to say I don't like Kate when I do? (*Throws himself in chair, L., being shielded from view. Kate enters R., and goes C., looking from door.*)

Kate. (*Coming down stage a short distance.*) Frederic! Frederic! (*Clarke listens.*) Why, how foolish. I thought I heard his voice. And if I did, what would he think of me if he heard me calling his name — *so tenderly*?

Clarke. (*Jumping up. Kate screams, runs R.*) He would think just what he does, and always has — that you do love him. (*He embraces Kate.*) He knows and confesses that he loves you, and only a foolish pride, a useless resentment, has prevented him from saying those words that would remove all differences, and bring our loving hearts together for life.

Kate. (*Archly.*) And you will say those words and give up that useless resentment? If you will, do not say too much, for I am not angry now; and when *you* yield, shall I be less kind, less yielding? (*Aside.*) I wish Mrs. Blennerhassett could hear me.

Clarke. Let me say then, politically I am still opposed to Col. Burr. We differ as two honest men can without losing our respect for each other. For what he has done for you, and others, as friend and benefactor, I can respect — and — and —

Kate. And what, Frederic?

Clarke. And love him! There, it is out. (*Kate throws herself into his arms.*)

Kate. This moment of happiness makes up for so many days of misery, so many heartaches. Oh, Frederic! (*Buries her face on his shoulder.*)

Clarke. And carries me back to that beautiful morning —

Kate. Don't, don't speak of *that* morning, Frederic. Let us begin a new life this day, and put all the bitter past away.

Clarke. Kate, we will. (*They embrace. Enter Graham, C., stops, then advances, brusquely.*)

Graham. Do I address Captain Clarke?

(*Fred. turns quickly. Kate goes L.*)

Clarke. That is my name, sir. And your business?

Graham. Is private—for your ear alone, begging the lady's pardon.

(*Fred. goes R. with Kate, Graham L.*)

Kate. And you will come and see me as soon as your business is attended to?

Clarke. At once.

Kate. And you are sure you can greet my foster father, Col. Burr, and take your wife with his blessing?

Clarke. No word or act of mine shall ever tend to recall past differences or make new ones between myself and Col. Burr, your foster father. (*They clasp hands.*)

(*Kate exit R., looking back smilingly at Frederic.*)

Clarke. (*Walking C.*) Now, sir, I am at your service.

Graham. Have you instructions from your superior officer, Col. Phelps?

Clarke. I have, to obey such orders as may be given me by one named —

Graham. Graham, that is the name, is it not?

Clarke. It is.

Graham. Does that convince you I am the party? (*Shows paper.*)

Clarke. (*Looking at it.*) It does.

Graham. What do you consider your duty if I give you an order to arrest two parties?

Clarke. My duty as a soldier is to obey orders, regardless of personal consequences.

Graham. And you will do it?

Clarke. This is useless trifling, sir, and hints at an imputation that no honest man would not resent.

Graham. Pardon me, but when a man is selected to carry out the will of the President of the United States, there must be no possible doubt of his fitness.

Clarke. The President?

Graham. Yes, and this paper empowers you to arrest Aaron Burr for high treason, and Harman Blennerhassett as an accomplice and accessory.

Clarke. No, sir, I cannot do it. I will not!

Graham. Why not?

Clarke. Because I cannot.

Graham. What prevents a soldier from doing his duty?

Clarke. The sacred tie of friendship. Spare me this blow, Mr. Graham. Anyone else can serve this as well as I. Mr. and Mrs. Blennerhassett are my dearest friends, and as innocent as you or I of such a crime.

Graham. Well, is Col. Burr also one of your dearest friends?

Clarke. (Impetuously.) He has been my greatest enemy, but — there are reasons —

Graham. Personal ones? I thought you said an honest soldier spurned such trifles.

Clarke. Trifles? Oh! my God, if you only knew —

Graham. Tell me.

Clarke. I cannot. It is too sacred a trust.

Graham. Tell me, or do your duty. Refuse to do the first, and you *must* serve the writ of arrest. Decide! There is no time to lose. (*Clarke in great excitement — suddenly turns to Graham.*) Your answer.

Clarke. I will not tell you my reasons.

Graham. Come, then; lead your men here, and do your duty, or a court martial will bring out your cherished secrets.

(*Graham exit C., beckons to Fred., who with an agonizing glance towards R., exit C.*).

(*Enter Mr. and Mrs. Blenn., and Col. Burr, R. The latter has a large map in his hands, which he places upon a table.*)

Burr. I knew I was not mistaken in you, Mr. Blennerhassett. Pardon my presumption, but I have gone on the assumption from the first, that you would join me. I have done much in a quiet way since I have been under your friendly roof.

Blenn. You haven't had time to do a great deal since you bought the land.

Mrs. B. Now, we shall know the secret of those numerous visits to Marietta.

Burr. Yes, you shall know. It is your right. I have made a contract for the building of fifteen large *bateaux* to take ourselves, our emigrants and their goods to our new empire on the Washita. One of these boats is to be a palace, for yourself and Mrs. Blennerhassett, with a fire-place, and glass windows.

Mrs. B. That will be delightful; I always loved the water.

Blenn. So do I, but I shall miss Ransome when there is any fishing going on.

Burr. As soon as we are established, Alston, who is heart and soul with me, and Theo and Gamp will join us. Our boats will hold five hundred men. I shall have no lack of recruits. Our enter-

prise is to be a peaceful one, until the United States declares war against Spain; then we and our band of pioneers will aid the Mexicans to throw off the Spanish yoke; we will form a democratic empire, and enrich ourselves until our wealth shall put to shame the dreams of romance.

TABLEAU : — *Burr intoxicated with enthusiasm. Mrs. Blenn. looks admiringly at Burr, while Blenn. hardly seems to comprehend the magnitude of Burr's scheme. Kate looks in R.)*

Kate. Do I intrude?

Mrs. B. Not at all; come in; you can join our conspiracy.

Kate. (*Enters.*) Are you all conspiring? Not against me, I hope. I came to ask advice from friends, not to encounter enemies.

Burr. My dear Kate, I hope you will never meet worse enemies than we are.

Kate. I know I can never find truer friends.

Blenn. Ah! what's that. I imagined — of course I didn't—I imagined that I saw the captain from my laboratory window; that was when I burned my finger, my dear.

Kate. I will tell the truth; he was here, and he said —

Burr. What, again? That is the third time he has proposed.

Kate. But it was the first time that he ever said that no word or act of his should ever tend to recall past differences or make new ones between himself and Col. Burr. There, I think I have said it word for word.

Mrs. B. Let me congratulate you, Kate. Frederic is a noble fellow.

Blenn. So he is. We will have a big wedding here, and close with a dance, and then the guests can row home by moonlight on the Ohio.

Kate. Won't it be lovely? (*Enter Frederic C.*) Why, there is Frederic. (*Kate, Mr. and Mrs. Blennerhassett, and Burr go to meet him. He refuses to shake hands, does not notice Kate, and stands C. with a firm look on his face. All astonished.*)

Clarke. Ladies and gentlemen, this is the saddest moment of my life, when it should be the happiest. I have a most disagreeable duty to perform —

Kate. (*Going to him.*) Are you going to take back your promise?

Clarke. (*Deliberately opening paper.*) By this document I am directed by the governor of Ohio to arrest Aaron Burr for high treason, and Harman Blennerhassett as an accessory.

(*Kate gives a shriek and falls at Clarke's feet. Mrs. Blennerhassett turns to her husband who stands and looks irresolute. Burr, with a smile, looks at Clarke.*)

Burr. I am to be blessed with a most dutiful and respectful son-in-law.

Kate. Frederic, this must not be. How could you? Why did you not warn me, so he could escape?

Burr. His plans were well laid, but they will miscarry. He was willing to play the hypocrite to gain your hand, Kate, when he knew that in a short time he would disgrace your foster-father in your eyes.

Clarke. You wrong me cruelly, Col. Burr. The Blennerhassetts have been my dearest friends —

Burr. *Have been!* Well qualified. You say your document is given by the governor of Ohio; this island lies within the jurisdiction of Virginia.

Clarke. The warrant is issued at the President's request; he is not likely to have made such a mistake.

Burr. Why not? It is not necessary for the President of the United States to be a scholar. Proceed, young man, to serve your warrant, but first consider the consequences to yourself.

Clarke. I shall perform my duty as a soldier, whatever may befall me. You both must go with me to Marietta.

Burr. And if I refuse. If I resist this base and unexampled violation of the sanctity of a happy home. If I repel the accusation against Mr. Blennerhassett and myself with the scorn and contempt it deserves. Are *you* the man to be the tool of a political conspiracy to wreak vengeance upon a rival, defeated, but yet so strong as to be feared?

Clarke. Resistance will avail you nothing. (*Enter Graham, C. Blennerhassett sees him.*)

Blenn. (*Aside.*) That man!

Clarke. I hope and pray to Heaven that the innocence of both will be clear as the sun; but it is to the people of America it must be proved, and not to me.

Graham. Captain Clarke, if you have not the courage to do your duty, I will call in the soldiers to aid you.

Mrs. B. (To Frederic.) And have you deemed it necessary to bring a guard to assist you? Captain Clarke, you are a coward.
(*Mrs. B. looks indignantly at Fred., and exit C.*)

Kate. This must be a dream, Frederic, a horrid dream.

Burr. (To Graham.) Mr. Spy, — excuse the name, but I know you by no other, — I will go with you, and convict my accusers of conspiracy and perjury —

Graham. You speak to me as though *I* were the criminal.

Burr. A man who is guilty of intentional bad manners is capable of a crime.

Graham. You know what the law is —

Burr. Yes; whatever is boldly asserted and plausibly maintained. Now, it is on your side, but you shall not take *this* innocent man from his home. If you should ever need him, it will not be necessary to bring a regiment of soldiers. Mr. Spy, I am *your* prisoner. I must deny Cap. Clarke the pleasure of taking me into custody. I deny *his* authority, but I bow to the will of His Majesty, *the President*.

(*Enter Mrs. B., excitedly C. At the instant a flash of light shows at back, gradually growing brighter.*)

Mrs. B. Fly! fly, all of you! The soldiers have broken into the stores, and infuriated with liquor, they have set the stable on fire — and our happy home is doomed. (*Falls in chair. Blenn. and Kate rush to her assistance.*)

(*Lights down, red fire, shouts from the soldiers, reports from muskets. Mrs. Blenn., in despair, R., with Blenn. at his wit's end. Kate in tears. Clarke stands, abashed, L. C., up stage. Graham, C. Burr, R.*)

<i>Kate.</i>	<i>Blenn.</i>	<i>Graham.</i>	<i>Clarke.</i>
○	○	○	○
<i>Mrs. Blenn.</i>			<i>Burr.</i>
○			○

TABLEAU. CURTAIN.

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE: *Aaron Burr's law office in New York City. Time, December, 1812. Grate with fire, C., in flat. Portrait of Theodosia (covered) over mantel C. in flat. Door R. and L. R. to street. Burr's desk R. C. up stage.*

Portrait.

Window.

Grate.

Window.

Desk. Chair.

Bookcase.

Chair.

Chair. Lounge.

Door.

Door.

(As curtain rises Burr is discovered at desk R., busily writing.)

Burr. (Looking up.) With what opposite feelings of aversion and attraction did I return to my native land after an exile of four years. As I walked through the streets of Boston in disguise, under an assumed name, I questioned if it were not better that Aaron Burr should die a civil death and that Adolph Arnot should succeed to his fortune. *(Laughs satirically.)* My fortune? *(Changing his manner.)* No, that thought conquered me in a weak moment; it was unworthy of Aaron Burr, who still has fortune and fame before him. *(Rises, comes C.)* I came here, found *friends* as well as foes. My dear Troup gave me this office, put business in my way; in three weeks I have taken two thousand dollars in fees. With strength and will, and Theodosia and her boy — *(Enter Ransome R. Rushing R., grasping Ransome.)* Welcome, Ransome, your old black face looks brighter than an angel's to me, for you bring me tidings from my daughter — from Theodosia and Gamp. Speak, are they well?

Ransome. Lor' bless you, massa, they were well — very well, when I lef' 'em mos' three weeks ago. Miss Theodosy, she was nervous like, because she had n't got no letter from you, and Massa Gamp, he well, he was a little ailin', but take 'em all together everybody was well.

Burr. Yes, yes; poor girl. My letters must have often failed to reach her—and poor Gamp—just like his mother—such a slight physical frame that—(*knock at door R.*) Some one to see me on business. Ransome, you are tired. (*Goes L.*) Go in here and rest. (*Opens door L.*)

Ransome. Thank you, massa. (*Exit L.*)

(*Another sharp rap at door R. Burr sits at desk.*)

Burr. Come in!

(*Enter Graham, R. Looks at Burr—sign of recognition.*)

Graham. How do you do, Burr?

Burr. Good morning, sir! Have a chair? How can I serve you?

Graham. (*Impudently.*) You can't serve me at all. I have come to serve a writ on you; not the first time I have had that pleasure.

Burr. What do you mean, sir? I never saw you before.

Graham. Your memory is poor, Burr. Have you forgotten Blennerhassett's Island, and your arrest for treason by Mr. Graham, that's me, the special agent of the United States Government? You have fallen considerably in public estimation since then, Burr. (*Throws himself into chair and looks patronizingly at Burr.*)

Burr. You must have risen in public estimation.

Graham. Why, how, sir?

Burr. Because any honest employment demands more respect than does the life of a spy and informer.

Graham. Well, I won't get mad about that; that's all gone by, now. That duel of yours with Hamilton was a foolish piece of business.

Burr. My friend Hamilton, whom I shot, if he could hear you, would doubtless agree with you.

Graham. Hamilton was a gentleman in every respect.

Burr. If I had not known that, I never would have met him.

Graham. It's a pity you were not always as particular about your company. You have aided a great many bad men, Burr, fellows with pretty black characters.

Burr. They may be black to the world, I care not how black. They were ever white to me.

Graham. I am afraid their gratitude never did you much good.

Burr. (Rising.) There you are mistaken. Let me give you an instance. After the attack on Quebec, during the retreat, I found an English officer dying from starvation. I gave him water and a piece of dried horse's tongue that I fortunately had with me. Thirty-six years after I met this officer in Scotland, and over a good dinner we fought our battles again. Since my return to New York I have met his daughter, and she is one of my dearest friends. I saved the life of an enemy, and made two friends. Is gratitude lacking there?

Graham. (Rising.) I've no time to listen to stories. How about this writ? (*Burr looks at the paper.*) What are you going to do about it?

Burr. (Returning paper.) In two hours the claim shall be settled.

Graham. (Going R.) Well, if it is n't, you know —

Burr. (With dignity.) Sir! I said the claim would be settled in two hours. Good morning! (*Graham looks at Burr, then exit R.*) (*Coming C.*) The insolence of that fellow. But I conquered myself, and *that* conquered him. (*Goes to door L.*) Ransome! Ransome!

(*Enter Ransome L.*)

Ransome. Good lor', massa, I've been asleep.

Burr. It has done you good. Go to the post-office for me, Ransome.

Ransome. Yes, massa.

Burr. I expect a letter from Theodosia. Here is money for the postage. You know the way?

Ransome. Yes, massa. (*Exit R.*)

Burr. That claim that Graham has against me is an unjust one, but it would open many old wounds to defend myself as I could. I will pay it. To gain a footing here I will even submit to injustice.

(*Door R. is opened, Dr. Hosack looks in. Burr faces L.*)

Dr. H. Does Col. Burr have an office here with Mr. Troup?

Burr. (Turning quickly.) Is that you, Dr. Hosack? Come in!
(*Dr. Hosack enters, Burr rushes to meet him. They shake hands.*)
I am delighted to meet you, doctor.

Dr. H. And I'm glad to see you again, after your long —

Burr. Exile, doctor, call it by its right name.

Dr. H. Burr, I remember when I heard you were at Mr. Blennerhassett's I avoided an interview, at first.

Burr. Sit down, doctor. (*They sit C.*) What removed your antipathy to me?

Dr. H. Your devotion to your daughter during her illness. I knew that such a loving father must have *some good* material in him.

Burr. You are right, doctor. My love for my daughter is the best and truest part of me. My love for her and my ambition for military renown have been the moving springs of my life.

Dr. H. But how about law, politics, and — and — the ladies? (*Laughs.*)

Burr. Never loved for themselves, but only as means to my end. I would rather conquer one city than a thousand hearts. I would rather write one military proclamation than a thousand briefs, or — four Presidential messages.

Dr. H. I hope your health has been good.

Burr. Poor health is a crime for which I could never forgive myself. A sick man is a very contemptible animal, doctor. How have my enemies busied themselves during my absence?

Dr. H. In discussing your political and social achievements.

Burr. Has the bitterness against me on account of Hamilton's death died out to any extent?

Dr. H. But little. The mere mention of your name leads his friends to revive the whole misfortune.

Burr. Ah, doctor, if I had read Sterne more and politics less, I should have known that the world was wide enough for Hamilton and me. And the Blennerhassett matter? Has the public mind regained its reason?

Dr. H. Your enemies still maintain that you intended to bring about a separation of the Union.

Burr. (*Indignantly.*) What a baseless falsehood. I would as soon have thought of taking possession of the moon, and informing my friends that I intended to divide it among them. What other attacks am I subjected to?

Dr. H. Your past social victories have caused much animated discussion. By the way, Colonel, were you the gay Lothario *they* say you were?

Burr. I will answer you as a discreet maiden would. I never kiss, and tell!

Dr. H. That is what troubles them. Some say that you will tell, and mean to tell. They say you have in your possession letters that would compromise the fair fame of many ladies in high social position, and that it is your intention to use these letters as levers to lift you back into the social circle that now rejects but fears you.

Burr. They can dismiss their foolish fears. I would as soon poison the springs and food that gave sustenance to my enemy as divulge one fact that would injure those ladies who have trusted me. Doctor, those letters are in safe hands. While I live they may protect me from unscrupulous enemies. When I am dead they shall be burned. They shall never be used for a *post-mortem* vengeance. Let me tell you a little story, doctor. One day I was looking at some of my love trophies, when I was startled by a knock at the door. I pushed the articles into the box and locked it, and then admitted my fair visitor. With true female intuition her eye lighted upon a scrap of ribbon which bound a lock of hair. "Come, tell me directly, what little French girl you have had here. Whose hair is this?" I summoned all my dignity, and said, "Madam, it belonged to a lady who was once under my protection, and a woman who has ever been in these arms is sacred to me forever."

Dr. H. And I suppose your fair visitor's confidence was strengthened by your remarks.

Burr. I have a very vivid recollection that it was.

Dr. H. To own one's peccadilloes is manly, but is it so to assume responsibilities that do not belong to you? You never denied publicly the assertions of Mrs. D., which you told me privately were untrue.

Burr. Doctor, when a lady does me the honor to publicly name me as the father of her child, I trust I shall always be too gallant to show myself ungrateful for the favor.

Dr. H. (Rising.) I must go. I have a patient to visit.

Burr. Come back in an hour, doctor. I expect a letter from Theodosia, and I know you wish to hear from her.

Dr. H. Certainly I do, and I *will* run in again. Good-bye, Colonel. I hope you will hear only the best of news. (*They shake hands. Dr. Hosack exit R.*)

Burr. Those letters! They would fan the fiery feelings of many a brother, husband, and father, and lead to many a duel. No, I have had enough of duelling; the dead man wins the battle after all. I will never use those letters as a weapon if they let me alone. If my enemies go too far—their sisters, wives, and daughters may give them good advice. (*Knock at door R. Burr opens it. Enter Katz.*) Why, I am delighted to see you, Mrs.—Mrs.—

Kate. Not Mrs., but Miss.

Burr. What, Miss yet? Well, madam, I venture to assert that it is not the fault of my sex.

Kate. Why, yes, it is, too. It is *your* fault. Why, papa, you don't know me, do you? Have I so changed, or have you?

Burr. What, Kate, my lovely Kate? (*Embraces her.*)

Kate. Yes, Kate, *plain* Kate Embleton—as you left her eight years ago.

Burr. Seven years change the man. No wonder it has taken one more year to change *plain* Kate into beautiful Kate. And your husband that was to be —

Kate. Spoke love to me in one breath and called you such names with the next that we parted and I have not seen or heard of him for two years until to-day.

Burr. Be guided by me, Kate; he loves you. Don't let a poor old man like me stand between you any longer.

Kate. One thing I heard of yesterday that reconciled me to marrying Frederic—for, papa, I do love him. Now listen; a man quarrelled with his wife and he has been adjudged insane and sent to an asylum.

Burr. In such a case our lunatic asylums will soon be full of *married* men.

Kate. Did you have a fine time in Europe?

Burr. Like a year's weather, — some sunshine and some shadow.
I saw Vanderlyn.

Kate. The little boy you called the genius of the roadside?

Burr. Yes, and he is doing famously. I dined and wined with poets, authors, artists, diplomats, princes and princesses, and queens and kings. I put the kings last where they belong. Let me give you a maxim, Kate: read a book before you see the author. I was introduced to one in a Paris salon. He talked book for an hour, and as I had not read his work, you can faintly imagine my misery, but even that was not as painful as my experience next day.

Kate. Why, what happened then?

Burr. I read his book. (*Kate laughs.*)

Kate. What was it about?

Burr. The plot was beautiful. In Shakespeare's hands it could have been made famous for all time, but my poor literary friend was unequal to the task.

Kate. What *was* the story?

Burr. Only this simple tale of human anguish and misery. A poor Venetian gondolier loved a maiden of Austrian birth, whose surpassing charms had attracted the attention of a gay young libertine, a member of the Venetian nobility. The young nobleman was sent on a diplomatic mission to Austria and during his absence the gondolier married the girl, and they became the happy parents of two lovely children. The nobleman returned. Filled with rage at the escape of the girl he declared the wife was an illegitimate child. She found friends to protect her good name, her father and mother were brought from Austria, and the wicked charge disproved, but the Devil helped the nobleman, for the truth came out during the trial that the man and wife were in truth brother and sister.

(*The picture.*)

Kate. Horrible!

Burr. The idiotic Frenchman closed the story in true French style. The young man went home with his father, the state took the children, and the nobleman took the poor woman who was a wife and yet no wife.

Kate. Would Shakespeare have ended it more true to nature?

Burr. Not *untrue* to nature, and that would have made the story deathless. The father and mother, guilty but yet guiltless, would have killed their children and then died in each other's arms. (*A pause.*)

Kate. And would the public applaud that? I have heard they do not like such tragic takings-off.

Burr. In every theatre in Europe that I visited they have a parcel of rascals hired to applaud everything, and they are paid extra for tears and lamentations.

Kate. What displeased you most while in Europe?

Burr. The servants. My valet in Sweden was of no earthly use to me. He got drunk before dinner. (*Both laugh heartily.*)

Kate. (*Suddenly.*) Why, I'm ashamed of myself! How is Theodosia?

Burr. I am expecting a letter every moment. Go and find Frederic and bring him here and we will read Theodosia's letter together. Not a word — go — and bring the young man before me. He shall marry you. (*Kate laughs and exit R.*)

Burr. What a power the voice and smile of a pretty woman has to drive away melancholy and make one cling to life. When Theodosia and her boy are with me again I can laugh at fate and pity my enemies. Ah! I must borrow the money to pay that claim of Graham's.

(*Enter Ransome R., with letter.*)

Burr. (*Rushing R., and grasping the letter from Ransome.*) 'T is from Theodosia; it is her writing. Sit down, Ransome, while I read about my daughter and Gamp. (*Ransome sits L., Burr stands C.*) Now I shall hear from Theodosia and Gamp. (*Opens letter and reads. The smile fades from his face and a look of agony takes its place. Ransome watches him.*)

Ransome. Bad news, massa?

Burr. Yes; bad news, and good news. My darling boy, my namesake — my Gamp — *our* Gamp is dead. Poor Theodosia, how lonesome she will be.

Ransome. Poor Gamp. We had such nice times together. He always stood up for Uncle Ransome. Yes, massa, he called me uncle. But the good news, massa?

Burr. My daughter is coming to New York to see her father after a long separation — nearly five years. (*Door opens, enter Alston.*) Joseph!

Alston. Father. (*They embrace and stand speechless for an instant. Then they clasp hands, and with averted faces look away from each other. Ransome exit L.*)

Burr. (*Turning to Alston.*) Our boy is gone.

Alston. Yes, and Theodosia was almost distracted. I feared that the throbs of her almost broken heart would be too much for one in her weak condition. But she is her father's daughter. She summoned all her will power, and said, "No tie but you, Joseph, binds me here now. May I go to my father?" "Yes," I answered, "and I will go with you." But I had important business in Richmond and Washington, and so came by land. She could not undergo the fatigue, and so she is coming by boat.

Burr. With what joy shall I clasp her in these arms again. During these long, weary years, Joseph, Vanderlyn's picture of Theodosia has been my companion, my joy, my solace. Do you know, when in Sweden I took it to Breda, a great Swedish painter, for renovation. When travelling, I rolled it up, but I did not know enough to roll the paint side out. In contrast with Breda's bright coloring, Theodosia's picture seemed faded, and that impression has almost made me superstitious. (*Looks at picture, C.*)

Alston. Dismiss the foolish fancy. We have suffered, but Theodosia is left to us. I shall remain here for the winter, and we shall be so happy.

Burr. What vessel did she sail on?

Alston. The "Patriot."

(*Enter Dr. Hosack, R.*)

Dr. H. Well, Alston, glad to see you. How are you? How is your wife and little Gamp? (*Alston turns away.*)

Burr. Doctor, Gamp is dead, and my bereaved daughter is on her way to New York. We are going to the wharf to see if there are any tidings. Come with us. (*Enter Ransome L.*) Ransome, I will return in a short time. (*Burr, Dr. H., and Alston exit R. Ransome sits on lounge, L.*)

Ransome. Poor Gamp. He called me Uncle Ransome. We used to go riding together, and fishing, and he never said a cross word to me in all his life. (*Rap at door, R. Ransome goes R. and opens door. Enter Mr. and Mrs. Blennerhassett. Ransome starts back in astonishment.*) Good Lor' preserve us. What! Massa and Missis Blennerhassett here? Why, I have n't laid eyes on you since I went to Souf Car'lina five years ago. (*Mr. and Mrs. Blennerhassett enter, Cross to L., and sit on lounge.*)

Mrs. B. We have been through much suffering and many privations since we last met, Ransome.

Ransome. So has Massa Burr.

Mrs. B. I am glad to hear it!

Blenn. Hush, Margaret.

Ransome. Miss Theodosia's boy, little Gamp, is dead. The news just came, this very minute.

Mrs. B. Harman, he is bowed beneath a great affliction. Perhaps in his own distress he will be mindful of the miseries of others. Will he return soon?

Ransome. In a few minutes.

Blenn. Margaret, I dread this interview. I am so weak — I wish the time for meeting him was not so soon, and so sudden, as it will be.

Ransome. (*Going L.*) Come in here, Massa Blennerhassett — I will tell him you are here, when you are ready.

(*Mrs. Blenn. exit L. Ransome walks with Blenn. to door L. Blenn. turns to Ransome.*)

Blenn. And your mother, Ransome, did you see her as you expected to when you left us?

Ransome. Bless you, massa, yes,— and Massa Alston bought her and we lived together until a year ago she died in these arms.

Blenn. (*Shaking hands.*) You were always a good boy, Ransome.

(*Blenn. exit L.*)

(*Enter Burr, R.*)

Ransome. Has she come, massa?

Burr. (Throwing himself in chair.) No, Ransome, no tidings. The boat is a week overdue, but there have been heavy storms on the North Carolina coast — and, there is still hope. Dr. Hosack and my son are at the wharf now.

(Burr drops his face in his hands. Ransome stands silent, L. C. A pause.)

Ransome. Massa Burr! *(Burr pays no attention.)* Massa Burr! Massa Burr! *(Burr looks up, Ransome points L.)*

Burr. (Jumping up excitedly.) In there? What, Theodosia? Why did n't you tell me before? *(Burr rushes L. Ransome after him, wringing his hands. Burr opens door L.)* Theodosia! Theodosia, come to your father. *(Mrs. Blennerhassett appears at door L. Burr starts back.)* Good God! Margaret Blennerhassett — here?

(Burr goes R., Mrs. Blennerhassett enters followed by Blennerhassett.)

Mrs. B. Yes, Col. Burr, we intrude upon your privacy as you once did on ours. Your unwelcome guests are Harman Blennerhassett and his wife Margaret — *your* victims.

(Ransome exit L.)

Burr. You find me suffering from a domestic affliction.

Mrs. B. And you find *us both* suffering from a domestic affliction. There is, thus, a partnership in misery between us.

Burr. We once contemplated a more pleasing partnership.

Mrs. B. Yes! And why did you seek it? Why did you ever enter our innocent, happy home? Why did not the flowers wither at your approach? Shall I tell you why you came as a destroyer and turned our paradise into a hell? Because your mind was tortured with remorse for the unfortunate duel with Hamilton; because you were sickened by disappointment in political preferment; because you were disgusted with President Jefferson's just and pacific policy with all nations, — it was for these reasons that you sought to bury the disquietudes that were tearing your soul, by plunging into deeds of such wonderful magnitude. *(Burr looks coolly at Mrs. Blennerhassett, Blennerhassett leans heavily upon his wife.)* Col. Burr, physical weakness obliges my husband to sit in your presence. *(Mrs. Blennerhassett leads Blennerhassett to lounge upon which he sits.)* You knew full well the advantages which wealth and influence would add to

your undertakings, and so you sought first to secure the co-operation of the most conspicuous characters at that time living in the West. My husband was a shining treasure, too valuable to remain unnoticed. His wealth, his acquirements, his influence convinced you that he would be a powerful auxiliary in your schemes. Like the serpent in Eden, you wound yourself into the open and unpractised heart of my unfortunate husband, and craftily, by degrees, infused into it the poison of your own ambition.

Burr. Madam, do not mistake my silence for self-conviction or remorse. Naturally, as a wife should, you have a good opinion of your husband. Love and not reason guides your judgment. Your husband was never a bad man; he was always a weak one. A man of some knowledge, and but little common sense. He required no persuading to enter into my southwestern scheme. Both of you were eager to embark in it, the moment it was mentioned. Did I profit by his wealth? Have I not lost all as well as you? Do you doubt that if I had profited by your aid I would not, in good faith, like a man of honor, have made such money reparation as lay in my power?

Blenn. (*Rising.*) Do you ask me that question, Col. Burr? If so, I will answer that I have long since ceased to consider reference to your *honor, resources, or good faith* in any other light than as a scandal to any man offering it — unless he is sunk as low as yourself.

Burr. Did I not repay some of the money — all that I could secure? Did you not write such insulting letters to my son-in-law, demanding money in my name, that my daughter became convinced it was an audacious swindling trick, and called you “a low-bred coward”? Who is this Blennerhassett that holds a daughter accountable for her father’s misfortunes?

Blenn. Who *is* Blennerhassett? Look at me, and answer your own question. Who *was* Blennerhassett? Memories of the happy past will aid me to answer *that*. I was a native of Ireland, a man of letters, to whom war was distasteful, and who fled from the storms of his own country to find quiet in this. I sought the solitude of the western forests. I built a home, yes, a palace. With my library, my philosophical researches, the delights of music, a lovely wife, and loving children, I was happy. In you, the

destroyer came. The dignity of your demeanor, your seductive conversation, and fascinating address made my conquest easy. In a short time my whole nature was changed, every object of my former delight I relinquished. Visions of diadems and titles of nobility, stories of great heroes and conquerors took the place of the innocent faces of my children and the smiles of my wife. The end came, the visions disappeared. My house was burned, my wife, driven from its shelter, shivered at night on the banks of the Ohio; my island became a wilderness again. Was ever the power of the tempter more plainly shown; was ever ruin more complete? Aaron Burr, shrink not from your work; forget not that having ruined me in fortune, character, and happiness forever, you did not scruple to attempt to finish the tragedy by thrusting me between yourself and punishment. (*Blenn. stops, gasps for breath.*) Margaret! (*Blenn. falls upon the lounge. Ransom enters from L., and bends over his old master. Mrs. Blenn. kneels beside her husband. Enter Kate and Frederic, R. Burr rises and rushes R., to meet them.*)

Kate. Your blessing! We are married. (*Mrs. Blenn. looks R.*)

Burr. (*To Mrs. Blenn.*) You see, I have made a few people happy.

Mrs. B. And many miserable.

(*Enter Dr. Hosack and Alston R. Burr rushes R. to meet them.*)

Burr. Has she come?

Alston. Speak, doctor, I cannot.

Dr. H. (*Burr grasps Dr. H. and looks into his face.*) Calm yourself, Burr. There may yet be hope, but all fear that the vessel is lost, with all on board. (*Burr looks fixedly at Dr. H. All eyes are turned toward Burr.*) Would to God, Burr, I could offer you some consolation.

Burr. Consolation? For me? I do not need it. I always accept the inevitable without repining. I was thinking of *her*. What a fate, poor thing.

Alston. Do not lose all hope. There is a possibility, they say, that the vessel may have been captured by pirates, and she may be in prison.

Burr. (*Intensely.*) No, an idle hope. She is indeed dead. She perished in a storm in that miserable little boat. Were she alive, all the prisons in the world could not keep her from her father. From this day forth the world is a blank to me, and life has lost its value. By this blow, I am severed from the human race.

(*Enter Graham. He advances, but is pushed back by Dr. Hosack, who points to Burr.*)

Mrs. B. A terrible retribution!

Blenn. From the hand of Heaven!

Burr. (*Takes Alston by the arm and goes up stage; pulls the covering from the picture of Theodosia — Theodosia is seen — lime light.*) Theodosia and her boy are in Heaven. (*Kneels.*) Thus dies ambition. Thus ends my dream.

Blenn. And ours.

Mrs. B. "The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

Portrait of Theo.

○

Clarke. Kate.

○

○

Alston.

○

Blenn.

○

Burr.

○

Mrs. B.

○

Graham.

○

Ransome.

○

Dr. Hosack.

○

MUSIC.

(*Ransome stands L., with head bowed. Mrs. Blenn. drops her head upon her husband's breast. Alston stands with head bowed. Burr kneeling. Clarke and Kate with hands clasped. Graham and Dr. H., R.*)

TABLEAU. CURTAIN (*slow*).

END OF THE PLAY.



Aug 12 1901

MAY 11 1901

BLANNERHASSETT

OR

The Irony of Fate

A DRAMATIC ROMANCE

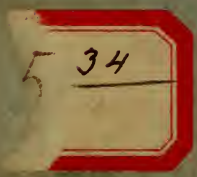
IN

A PROLOGUE AND FOUR ACTS

FOUNDED UPON INCIDENTS IN THE LIFE OF HARMAN BLANNERHASSETT,
HIS WIFE MARGARET, AARON BURR, HIS DAUGHTER
THEODOSIA, AND ALEXANDER HAMILTON

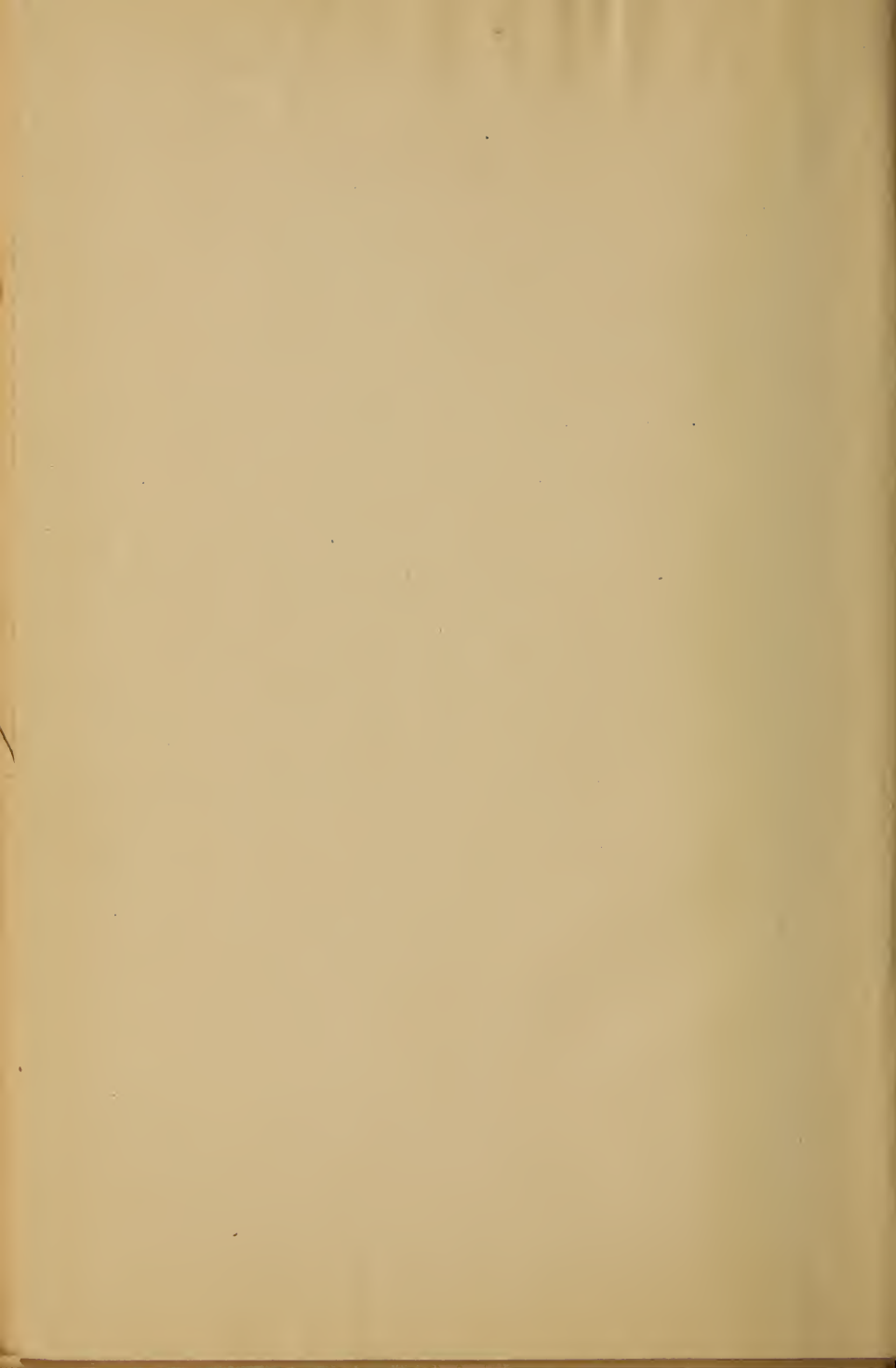
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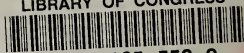


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